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Wow me!

SO, I have to confess to you that I'm your worst nightmare. As a mom, I fall into that next-generation parent category that tends to be a lot stricter and more protective than the boomer generation. I'm a vigilant gatekeeper when it comes to Kira's entertainment experiences, and although I know I can't hold back the flood forever, so far only a couple of properties have trickled through the door at my house.

One is Baby Einstein. I bought into the philosophy and the testimonials early on and picked up the whole set before Kira was born. Good thing too, because she loves them! And when we watch the DVDs together, I can actually see her learning new things, so that makes me rest easy about the decision to expose her to them.

The other property came into our lives unexpectedly and, I admit, despite my initial intentions to block it out. One day when Kira was about eight months old, our DVD player broke down. I was in a fix because I had already made a big, fat deal about announcing that it was Baby Einstein time, and Kira was raring to go. She had crawled over to the TV, cranked her head back to watch the way only kids can, and was very clearly expecting some kind of on-screen action.

I just couldn't let her down after building the event up so much, so I turned on the TV and flipped around until I found *Sesame Street*, which I thought was a perfect substitute for Einstein since the show does such a fabulous job teaching curriculum in a fun way. But Kira didn't seem very interested until about halfway through the episode, when the first strains of a very familiar ditty started playing. "La-la, la-LA, la-la, la-LA..." Yup, it was *Elmo's World*. And she was riveted from the get-go.

She sat still, with an utterly charmed little smile on her face for the whole segment. Sometimes she pointed to the screen and said "Ga" (which in Kira-speak means "What is that?" or "I like that"). But mostly, she just watched with a kind of rapt attention that I hadn't seen often from her.

To Kira, it was magic—the same kind of magic that Mattel Brands president Neil Friedman talks about in his feature interview with Gary Caplan on page 66. He says every hit toy has a "wow factor," some surprising element that makes everyone smile and want to play with it over and over again. And that's exactly how Kira responds to Elmo every time she sees him, no matter whether she's watching the show, reading an Elmo book, or sitting in her Elmo Giggle and Shake Chair at daycare. There's just something inherent to the character that bewitches her, and I'd never really seen firsthand before just how powerful a kids entertainment property that nails that element can be.

So as I make my way to KidScreen Summit in a couple of weeks, and then to MIPTV in April, I'm going to be on the lookout for the "wow factor"—if for no other reason than to see that smile light up my daughter's face again and know that it was because of something I introduced her to.

—jocelyn

VP and Group Publisher

Donna MacNeil (dmacneil@brunico.com)

Editor

Jocelyn Christie (jchristie@brunico.com)

Managing Editor/Online Editor

Lana Castleman (lcastleman@brunico.com)

Senior Writer

Kate Calder (kcalder@brunico.com)

Online Writer

Gary Rusak (grusak@brunico.com)

Art Director

Jubert Gutierrez (jgutierrez@brunico.com)

Writers and Contributors,

Jim Benton, *Bloomfield*
Gary Caplan, *Studio City*
Doug Murphy, *Toronto*
Lianne Stewart, *Toronto*

ADVERTISING SALES

(416) 408-2300, 1-800-KID-4512

Associate Publisher

Myles Hobbs (mhobbs@brunico.com)

**Senior Account Manager and
Business Development Team Leader**

Mike Croft (mcraft@brunico.com)

Account Manager

Ian Lambur (ilambur@brunico.com)

Publisher's Assistant

David Terpstra (dterpstra@brunico.com)

Conference Producer

Meredith Jordan (mjordan@brunico.com)

CONTACT US:

Tel: (416) 408-2300

Fax: (416) 408-0870

366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 500
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5V 1R9

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What's Up?

publisher's notes

This is a big month for us KidScreeners! Not only are we presenting you with the following 100 pages of this month's terrific issue, we're hosting almost 1500 of you in New York at this year's KidScreen Summit, but we're launching our new daily newsletter **KidScreen Daily**, announcing our next event – **KidScreen West** (May 14-15, 2007 Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, Santa Monica, CA), and unveiling a beta version of our new property database to a select group of testers. We do windows too...ha-ha!

Debating February 7th is **KidScreen Daily**, our new daily email keeping you in the loop with news, property updates, community fun, links and more. As email and online communication has evolved rapidly in the past couple of years, we waited to jump into this space until we had been able to observe online reading patterns and determine what daily offerings would serve you best. Like the magazine itself, **KidScreen Daily** content will offer our take on what you need to know with fun and fresh perspective. You'll find **KidScreen Daily** in your inbox and online at www.kidscreen.com. Send news and information to Online Editor Lana Castleman (lcastleman@brunico.com) or Online Writer Gary Rusak (grusak@brunico.com). The launch of a new daily offers new and exciting marketing opportunities for advertisers as well, contact your sales rep or email sales@kidscreen.com.

On behalf of the entire *KidScreen* team, I'd like to extend my deepest thanks to those of you have embraced, supported, and committed to this month's **KidScreen Summit**. Along with Presenting Sponsor Cartoon Network and Platinum Sponsor Nicktoons Network, we have 30 sponsors, 120 speakers and almost 1500 delegates coming together this year. I've mentioned this to some of you before, and I'll say it again. What inspires me most about the **KidScreen Summit** is the collective energy of so many great minds and talents coming together. It's a relaxed and informal environment where busy people can spend time together, and it's rewarding to see so many people laughing, learning and doing business all at the same time.

For the Summit this year we've really worked on increasing the licensing and consumer products presence both in the agenda and in our mix of attendees. Though not everyone necessarily works directly together in the CP and television sectors, both are vital to each other's success and we want to facilitate better networking amongst the two groups.

We've gotten terrific response and have announced follow up at our next event, **KidScreen West** (May 14-15, 2007, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel) which will focus exclusively on licensing, marketing and consumer products strategy issues. Demands on both licensors and licensees are high in the current market, and we think this forum will provide an excellent opportunity for you to offer each other the kind of critical support that you deserve. Our first early bird rate is in effect until March 15th, register online at www.kidscreenwest.com. As I sit writing in -26°C weather, I know I'm certainly dreaming of poolside chats at the Loews!

Finally, along with Associate Publisher Myles Hobbs, I'd like to extend a public welcome to the newest member of our sales team – Account Manager *Ian Lambur*. Ian's no stranger to the kids' entertainment biz and we are pleased to have him with us championing the many great advertising and marketing opportunities that *KidScreen* has to offer.

Enjoy!

Donna MacNeil

VP and Group Publisher
dmacneil@brunico.com

Brunico Communications Inc.

President & Executive Publisher
James Shenkman (jshenkman@brunico.com)

Controller
Linda Lovegrove (llovegrove@brunico.com)

VP & Group Publisher, Children's Entertainment
Donna MacNeil (dmacneil@brunico.com)

VP & Editorial Director
Mary Maddever (mmaddever@brunico.com)

VP & Group Publisher, Nonfiction
Diane Rankin (drankin@brunico.com)

VP, eBrunico and Circulation
Omri Tintpulver (otintpulver@brunico.com)

EV,
Canadian Marketing/Canadian Entertainment
Laas Turnbull (lturnbull@brunico.com)

BrunicoCreative
Director, Creative Services
Kerry Aitchison (kaitcheson@brunico.com)

Creative Director
Stephen Stanley (ssstanley@brunico.com)

Production Coordinator
Daisy Cheung (dcheung@brunico.com)

Brunico Circulation
Manager, Circulation
Jennifer Colvin (jcolvin@brunico.com)

Senior Circulation Administrator
Sidoney Roberts (sroberts@brunico.com)

Distribution Administrator
Shaney Maguire (smaguire@brunico.com)

Published 9 times a year by Brunico Communications Inc.,
366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 500,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1R9.
Tel: (416) 408-2300.

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As the strike marches on, delivery of shows such as CCI's *Erky Perky* may be delayed



by gary rusak

The Canadian actors' strike was heading into its fourth week at press time. It's not only messing with production skeds, but if it continues much longer, it may also have an impact on the country's role as a major international player in the animation biz.

With last-ditch negotiations abandoned and the two sides heading to court, the ACTRA strike against the Canadian Film & Television Production Association has forced some of the country's producers to re-evaluate their production plans. The

strike immediately halted live-action filming. And while animated projects have a little more leeway since dummy voices can be inserted during primary animation, time is running out.

Jim Corston, executive VP of production for Toronto's CCI Entertainment, says that if the strike lasts much longer, the company will have to alter delivery schedules for its toons, including the second season of *Erky Perky*, airing on YTV in Canada and Seven Network and ABC in Australia.

Perhaps more troubling is the probability of lost contracts and the prevention of future Canuck co-pros. With no agreement on wages, setting up budgets for prospective projects in the pitch stage would be near impossible.

Vince Comisso, president and CEO of Toronto's 9 Story Entertainment, says the strike has stopped production of *Best Ed*, a 52 x 11-minute digitally animated series that airs on Teletoon in Canada and internationally on Cartoon Network. Comisso adds that although there are workarounds from a production standpoint, these are sometimes pricey and could ultimately damage the end-product.

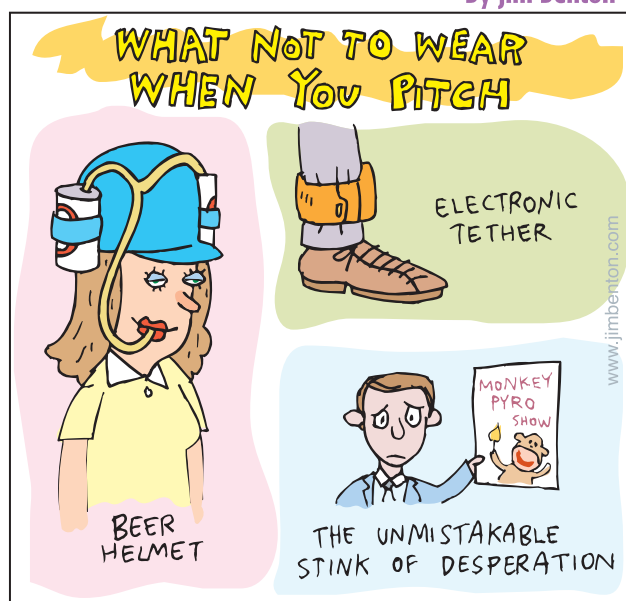
Canuck producers, who are already feeling the pinch from a robust Canadian dollar, are hoping for a resolution to the conflict with a negotiated settlement on the wage increase question. However, actor remuneration for projected and theoretical web-based revenues seems to be the stickiest issue, and one that might have a detrimental effect on producers' bottom lines.

"When we are dealing with international co-producers, they aren't throwing money at us for the website," says Corston, adding that if a fee for digital rights is agreed upon, it will come right out of the production budget.

International eyes are watching the digital rights conflict closely, as performers' unions around the globe grapple with the same issue. State-side, the advertising industry's Joint Policy Committee has been joined by the Screen Actor's Guild and AFTRA to develop a working digital rights model. However, preliminary pay structures aren't expected to be released until at least the fall. **S**

Roll the Cartoon

by jim benton



Find out what the business's acquiring kinds want to know. Our annual buyers guide tells all on page 81.

Vidgame sales reach new high in '06

IF there was any doubt as to whether the consumer market was ready for a third wave of gaming platforms, they've been resoundingly silenced by the category's performance in 2006. According to retail sales tracker The NPD Group, the video game industry brought in US\$13.5 billion last year, beating 2005's tally by 18% and setting a new record for annual revenues in the category.

The growth was unequivocally driven by the launch of PS3 and Wii, as well as Xbox 360, which launched at the end of '05 but continued to sell well last year. As a result of these hot entries, console hardware sales finished up a whopping 88%.

And since heat in hardware tends to have a warming effect on software too, it's not surprising that game sales were up by 6%. Although *Madden NFL Football* (Electronic Arts) was the best-selling console game of '06, the top five included three kids/family entries, with THQ's *Cars* sitting in second, *Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy* from LucasArts in third, and Nintendo's proprietary NDS title *New Super Mario Brothers* in the fifth spot.



LucasArt's second Star Wars Lego game scored top-five sales

NPD also recently took a look at kid usage of electronic devices and the dynamics behind how they acquire digital content. On any given day, kids ages two to 14 average 44 minutes playing games on video game systems, and the same amount of time listening to music on portable digital music players (PDMPs). Highlighting the proliferation of consumer electronics and the trickle-down effect that eventually shapes usage of all technologies, the study

found that 15% of two- to five-year-olds use cell phones.

By the age of seven, more than one in 10 kids is downloading some form of content, and this number jumps to 22% by age 10 and 50% by 14. The report also reveals that most kids are paying for online content, despite the availability of freebies. A full 70% of PDMP users are paying for music; as are 55% of computer users, 67% of cell phone users and 87% of video game users. **KC**

KS readers pick *Foster's* and *Cars*



It's hard to go a day without hearing about how 2006's blockbuster animated feature films are faring in the awards race as the Golden Globes and Oscars both pay high-profile tribute to the best of the big-screen entries this time of year. But why stop at animated movies when some of the best work in the medium ends up on the small screen? So using the nominations list for the Annie Awards, a more peer-driven set of animation accolades that spotlights excellent work in a wider variety of categories, we turned the vote over to you this month. Polling a good-sized group of animation industry execs, and based on more than 80 responses, here are the projects that you'd give a statuette to if you could.

Best Animated Television Production
***Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*—Cartoon Network Studios**

Also nominated are: *Charlie and Lola*, *King of the Hill*, *The Fairly OddParents* and *Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!*

Best Animated Feature
***Cars*—Pixar Animation Studios**

Also nominated are: *Happy Feet*, *Monster House*, *Open Season* and *Over the Hedge*.

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HOT TALENT

Designing spouses

Espinosas prove creativity comes in pairs

It's not often that a married couple can be together 24/7 without driving each other a bit batty—let alone working closely on creative concepts that have attracted attention from the likes of American Greetings and Coca-Cola. But then most couples aren't Leo and Laura Espinosa.

The pair met in design school in the early '90s and set up a design house called Studio Espinosa in Cambridge, Massachusetts two and a half years ago. Now, they're getting ready for the launch of their first kids TV series *Sushi Pack*, which AG Properties picked up for development and production last year. And there's a lot more in the hopper for '07, as Leo and Laura apply their artistry to TV, consumer products and interactive projects for all facets of the kids demo.

In addition to *Sushi Pack*—a 2-D action/comedy about a gang of crime-fighting sushi that will debut in the U.S. this fall—AG has optioned *Wild Blue Yonder* (working title). The mixed-media preschool series revolves around three characters interacting with classic fables and is in development for production in 2008. In the short term, we can expect to see a lot of Harmony, the iconic star of a teen-targeted merchandise line Coca-Cola is rolling out this spring. Harmony is derived from Coke's famous "I'd like to teach the world to sing..." jingle, and Leo has reinterpreted the character for modern teens.



Otis and Rae, inspired by the Espinosas' kids, will star in a book next year

Leo, in particular, draws inspiration for kid designs and concepts from observing the Espinosa's two children, whom he affectionately refers to as "our little interns." The story behind one set of characters named Otis and Rae, he says, is really about the relationship between his son and his best friend, a girl who's a few years older. The gentle tales of the adventurous animal-like creatures impressed publisher Houghton-Mifflin, which has signed on to roll out a picture book based on the property in April 2008. The couple has retained the IP rights and will be looking to translate the book into TV and consumer products.

In interactive doings, Studio Espinosa has partnered with a Belgian firm called Le Ciel Bleu to produce an interactive web game for the new version of Sesame Workshop's *The Electric Company*.

Laura and Leo usually concentrate on Licensing Show as their forum for pitching new concepts, coming armed with at

least two new IPs every year that take them more than 12 months to develop. On the kids side of their idea portfolio, they're fine-tuning a girl-skewing concept called Kris Kros Apple Sauce that features a little pink pixie. And for boys, there's BMX Elliot, a lifestyle-oriented property that revolves around a madcap, bike-riding rabbit who wears a helmet all the time. **LC**

FuH...

Fizzy Fruit finds followers in retail and promos

Fruit-flavored soda has been around for eons, but Fizzy Fruit turns the idea on its head and makes an unpopular food group fun for kids. The Portland, Oregon-based company that shares a name with its product has invented a top-secret process for injecting carbonation into grapes and slices of apple and pineapple. So kids can enjoy what they so dearly love about drinking soda (namely, the prolific burping), while still getting the vitamins and antioxidants found naturally in fruit.

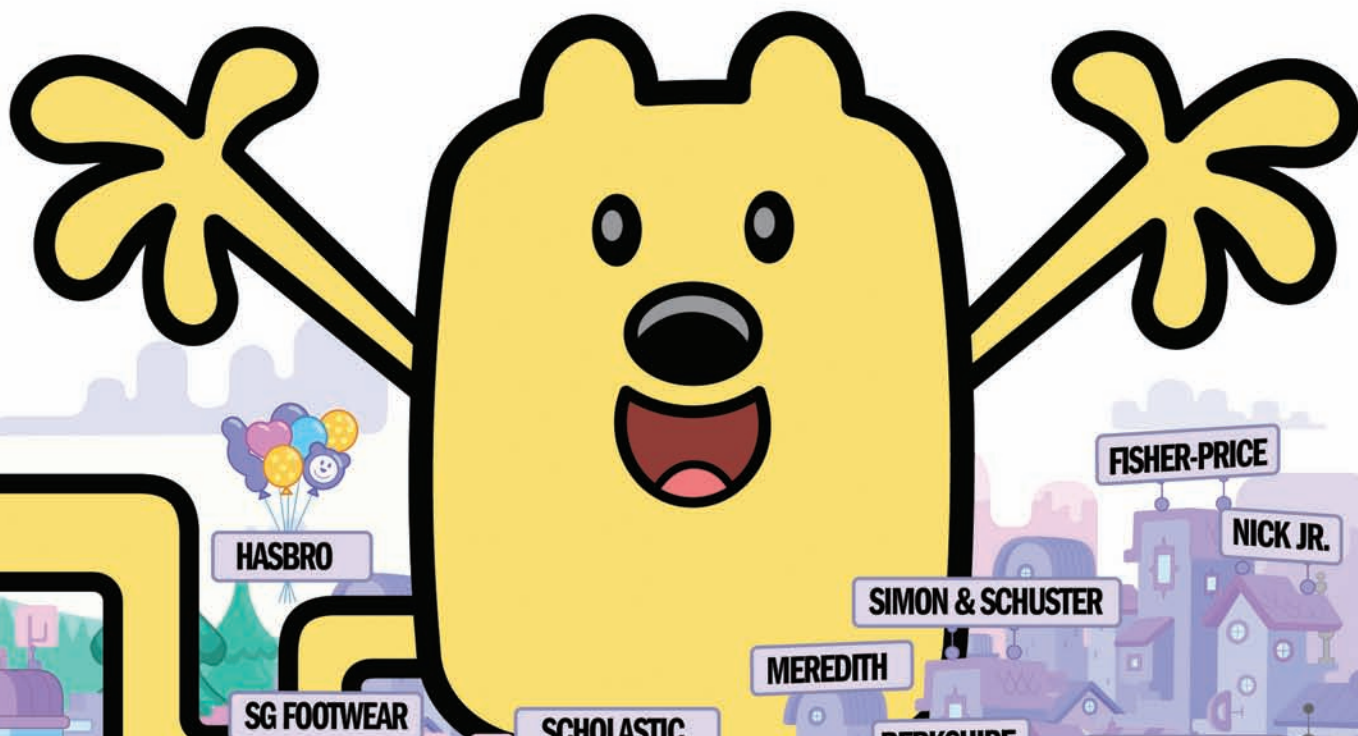
The product is currently selling in Wal-Mart and 7-Eleven stores in the Southern states, with 5-oz packages of the gaseous grapes going for US\$2.49. The product has also caught the attention of Disney, which will partner with Fizzy Fruit on a promotional tie-in for *Meet The Robinsons*, the studio's newest CGI film scheduled to hit theaters in March. **GR**



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A thumbnail sketch of a wanna-be wrestler

Anyone who's met Nicktoons VP and GM Keith Dawkins knows how passionate he is about football, boxing and basketball. But who would have guessed that his equally strong affinity for old-school wrestling antics à la WWF would land him a gig as a professional wrestler at the TWF. That's right: Dawkins plays The Big Time on *Thumb Wrestling Federation*, the

of his co-producing partners. "I started suggesting different characters and then found myself saying, 'You can't handle The Big Time,' in this loud wrestling voice," he says. And that's how Dawkins' alter-ego as the federation's over-the-top, Shaft-esque baddie was born.

Dawkins has a lot of say in how his character appears on the series. "They'll allow me to ad-lib and go for it, and it's so funny because I'll just completely transform into this other character while I'm doing the voiceovers," he says.

It's definitely not all fun and games. Well...OK, to Dawkins it is—but he admits it is strange to experience things like wardrobe malfunctions and hand cramps under the hot lights of the tiny set. The colorful wrestling masks have a tendency to pop off the tip of one's thumb when the fighting gets rough. "When you're wrestling, your hand starts to sweat, so wardrobe will literally come in and put tape on my thumb," he explains. "It's surreal."

Fortunately, Dawkins hasn't exhibited any diva-like behavior on the set yet. He's not walking around the Nicktoons office covering his hand in a protective towel or getting manicures. But he does take it seriously. In fact, his competitive nature really came out when The Big Time lost the grand championship in season one. There weren't any actual tears, but Dawkins was more than a little upset at the loss. Luckily, this kind of raw emotion just opens the door for more fun character development.

The second season of *Thumb Wrestling Federation* is currently in production, and the property's licensing agency Al Ovadia and Associates is signing up partners to round out a merch line that will center around toys from master licensee Spin Master. **LS**



Nicktoons VP & GM Keith Dawkins' opposable digit in full Big Time splendor

hilariously quirky short series Nicktoons co-produces with Animation Collective.

It turns out a latent fondness for '80s-style wrestling came bubbling up during a development meeting on the series, when Dawkins got caught up in the excitement of the sport in front

HIT brings umbrella brand concept to U.K. retail

In an effort to capitalize on its recent corporate rebranding, London, England's HIT Entertainment has launched an umbrella consumer products program called HIT Favourites. The company's redesigned logo that evokes the image of a jack-in-the-box forms the centerpiece of the brand's new look, and packaging on all products will sport no fewer than four HIT characters, including Bob the Builder, Thomas & Friends, Pingu and Rubbadubbers. VP of consumer products and international marketing Katie Rollins adds that individual brand plans won't change, but pairing Bob with Kipper, for example, will give consumer visibility to lesser-known properties, especially at a time when shelf space for non-blockbusters is at a premium.

Several U.K. licensees are already on-board for the focused program that's primarily targeting mid-tier and specialty retailers. Toyco Character Options will lead the springtime retail charge with puzzles and board games, while Kinnerton Confections is producing sweets for Easter.

Rollins and her team will measure U.K. performance before making plans to roll Favourites out internationally. In the meantime, she's entertaining pitches from apparel, stationery, party supply and health & beauty licensees to round out the initial offering. **LC**

HIT to cluster characters on packaging



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to be continued...



Vintage bits like this '70s short from *Sesame Street*'s library often still have educational relevance today

In April, *Sesame*'s writing staff will begin laying out scripts for the 26-ep season that touch on all the components of the vocab curriculum. The not-for-profit show has a very limited budget, so once the team has identified which subtopics the shorts need to address, Parente and her team will start off by mining the Workshop's back catalogue for anything relevant that isn't too dated. At one point, she says, there were nearly 400 hour-long reels in the library, and a lot of the stuff still has educational value.

Commissions will fill out the remaining holes in the show schedule, with the team greenlighting between 25 and 30 original shorts each season. As commissioning producer, it falls to Crystal Whaley to work with staple contributors such as New York's Cartoon Pizza and Magnetic Dreams out of Nashville, Tennessee.

But on top of that, she scours the market for ready-made shorts that fit the learning bill, as well as sifting through mountains of cold pitches that come in for the show. Although it's rare for one of these ideas to make it onto the air, says Parente, "you never know where you're going to find a diamond in the rough, so we try to keep our options open across the board."

The team aims for an even balance between live-action and toon shorts, but the scale often tips in animation's favor because it's a medium that allows the producers to present a different look than they're able to achieve with the show's other components.

Shorts shouldn't be any longer than a minute and a half in length, and they should be very visual. "One ringer is music, which is really important to us as we put the whole hour together," says Parente. "And anytime you can create strong characters, that will open up opportunity for short narrative stories." The team is always on the lookout for innovative styles in animation, as well as concepts that approach what for *Sesame Street* may be same-old cognitive subjects from a different angle.

In terms of deal structure, the Workshop pays a buy-out fee for properties it commissions in all territories and media because shorts tend to feed into the company's international *Sesame Street* co-productions. Since they don't pay a huge amount of money, the team works closely with its artists to minimize as much back-and-forth as possible. On average, *Sesame Street* shorts take two to three months to move from original pitch to delivery.

Looking ahead to 2008, the show will shift gears slightly to focus on the literacy of math, meaning everyday estimations and calculations that we don't even tend to recognize as math, like eyeballing an object to figure out whether it will fit into a certain-sized box. **S**

Tapping into kid culture

TO get a different perspective on some of its curriculum, Sesame Workshop recently turned to its pint-sized audience members. Last fall, the company partnered with the World Heart Federation to run two animation workshops in Colombia for seven- to 10-year-olds. The goal of the project was to help these budding toonsters animate their thoughts about heart health, as well as feeding kid-created shorts into *Plazo Sesamo*, the Latin American *Sesame Street* format that airs throughout South/Central America and Mexico, and in the U.S. on Telefutera and PBS.

Executive producer Ginger Brown and her team found two animation houses willing to host the workshops, which ran as five classes throughout October and November. Jaguar Taller Digital is based in the

nation's capital of Bogota, and Toonka Films in Cali, a more rural city in the Southwest. The kids' approaches to the issue were as different as their locales: The Bogota group tackled the subject very specifically, turning out a short about a surprise birthday party for a heart, complete with sound effects they recorded themselves. The Cali group, meanwhile, chose to take an overall body health tack, coming up with a concept about a boy who gets hypnotized by a candy bar. He keeps getting fatter and fatter until a carrot superhero saves him from obesity by teaching him how to change his eating habits and exercise.

The shorts will air on *Plazo Sesamo* sometime during the 2008 season, and Brown



Kid animators in Bogota celebrated heart health with a birthday party for the vital organ

says the effort will likely be repeated, perhaps by other *Sesame Street* co-productions in territories where animation is affordable. "It's a better way to get kids' honest opinions than showing them something an adult has done and asking for their feedback," she says, adding that it may also inspire some kids to pursue a career in animation. **JC**



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UP NEXT

What's developing in kids production

by lianne stewart

Sesame's little *Twiddlebugs* hope to make a big impression with preschoolers

Looking to spin out another hit show from its *Sesame Street* juggernaut, Sesame Workshop is working on a short series based on the little insect family living in Bert and Ernie's flower box. The *Twiddlebugs* are set to make the leap from puppet to CGI characters in a 52 x three-minute series that takes viewers on an educational trip through their wee buggy eyes.

In each short, the family grapples with a new problem, like Papa Thomas getting stumped one morning by the riddle "What's long and fuzzy, eats leaves, and has lots of legs?" As they ponder their dad's conundrum, little Timmy and Tessie head outside and see a caterpillar for the first time. They initially think it's a cat, but that diagnosis is debunked when the creature won't play with a piece of string. The family consults a magazine and finally realizes their new friend Kat is actually a caterpillar ready to blossom into a butterfly.

Like all things Sesame, *Twiddlebugs* will hinge on a well-defined preschool curriculum, this one focused on critical thinking, problem-solving, predicting, planning and guessing from clues. Budgeted at roughly US\$2 million, the series is pegged for delivery in September 2008, and the Workshop team is currently fielding co-pro and presale offers from North America, South America, Europe and Asia.

Twiddlebugs make short work of big problems

Animalia teaches kids the ABCs of action-adventure

Based on an illustrated alphabet book written by Aussie author Graeme Base in '86, *Animalia* is about to leap off the page and onto the small screen in an adaption from L.A.'s PorchLight Entertainment and Australia's Burberry Productions. But with a target demo of six- to nine-year-olds, this series goes way beyond teaching the alphabet to explore the farthest reaches of the animal kingdom, where humans don't exactly rule the roost.

When two kids walk through a dimensional portal in the library, they must quickly learn their place in the wild. In the first ep, they almost become alligator food when a large green gorilla named G'bubu sweeps them into the *Animalia* library. It's here that they find a large but unstable Core, which helps the animals communicate. The kids work with its keeper, Livingstone the Lion, to fix it using modern technology, and he's so impressed that he asks them to stay and solve more problems.

There are 40 half-hour episodes to this CGI show, which is budgeted at US\$18.5 million. And it's scheduled to debut on presale partners PBS, BBC, CBC and Australia's Network Ten and Nick Australia in Q3 2007.

Sea Princesses shores up a deal in Australia

In what may be one of the most far-flung co-production arrangements in recent kids entertainment history, Southern Star (based in Sydney, Australia), Neptuno Films (Madrid, Spain) and Flama Films (Sao Paulo, Brazil) are working together on a book-based concept for girls four to seven. *Sea Princesses* stars three daughters of underwater kings, whose penchant for naughtiness sometimes gets them into trouble. In one of the show's 12-minute eps, Ester and Polvina are running late for school, and the only way they can think of to get there before the bell is by riding an untamed seahorse. But the wild ride ends in a collision with Turtle King, who loses his crown. So the girls end up being late anyway because they have to stop and help him comb the ocean floor for it, a search that's made trickier by a mess of lures cast by a land-lubbin' fisherman.



With a target date of Q3 2007, *Sea Princesses* has been pre-sold to Seven Network in Australia, and the international partners are courting broadcasters in their regions. The 52-ep Flash-animated series is budgeted at about US\$270,000 per half hour, and consulting on the project is Brazilian author Fabio Yabu, who wrote the book series it stems from. **N**

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Sales Roundup

Program	Broadcaster	Style/Format	Demo	Producer/Distributor
Bear Behaving Badly	CBBC	Puppets/26 x half hours	five to nine	Darrall Macqueen
Gerald McBoing Boing	Cartoon Network Latin America	2-D/52 x half hours 2-D/40 x half hours 2-D/13 x half hours	four to eight five to nine eight to 12	Cookie Jar Entertainment
Johnny Test (season two)				
Horseland	ZDF/Ki.Ka (Germany) France 5/Teletoon (France) TV2 (Norway) SVT (Sweden) Jetix Holland VT4 (Belgium) TG4 (Ireland) S4C (Wales) Alter TV (Greece)	2-D/26 x half hours	girls six to 12	DIC Entertainment
Little Princess	France 5	2-D/30 x 11 minutes	preschool	TV-Loonland
Oban Star Racers	GMTV (U.K.)	2-D/26 x half hours	seven to 12	Sav! The World, Jetix Europe/Buena Vista International Television
Peppa Pig (season two)	Cartoon Network	2-D/26 x 10 minutes	preschool	Rubber Duck Entertainment
Roary the Racing Car	ZDF/Ki.Ka (Germany) France 5 NRK (Norway) TV2 Denmark Discovery Kids Latin America	stop-frame/52 x 10 minutes	preschool boys	Chapman Entertainment/ Target Entertainment
Spider Riders	Kids' WB!	2-D/52 x half hours	five to nine	Cookie Jar Entertainment
The Wumblers	Trinity Broadcasting Network and Smile of a Child (U.S.)	2-D/13 x half hours	preschool	Silly Goose, Cosgrove Hall/Gravity VFX

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News in Brief

Gotham and Yahoo! to animate the web

Representing more than 250 top directors, writers, producers, illustrators and artists, The Gotham Group has arguably one of the deepest talent pools in the kids entertainment industry. And despite its somewhat silly name, Yahoo! is certainly no fool when it comes to web content. So it's no surprise, really, that the two companies have hooked up in a first-look deal for web content. The multi-year partnership will see Gotham produce original webtoons around brand-new IPs and existing properties owned by its clients. The content will play out across all of Yahoo!'s content banners, although Jon Vein, who negotiated the deal for Gotham, says the teen stream tends to be where breakout hits happen.

Vein chose to work with Yahoo! because of the commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by senior execs such as chief business officer Ira Kurgan, who witnessed the meteoric success of *The Simpsons* and the Fox Kids brand while at Fox in a business affairs capacity during the '90s. A true believer in the power of animation, Kurgan is investing significantly in the medium to make Yahoo!'s online experience more entertaining. And looking ahead to the future, says Vein, dubbing animation into foreign languages without it seeming less indigenous means this content will travel well amongst Yahoo!'s international platforms.

Paramount steps out with Apple

Following bravely in Disney's trailblazing footsteps, Viacom's Paramount has hooked up with iTunes to make its back catalogue of movies available for download, including teen-friendly titles such as *Mean Girls* and *Save the Last Dance*. Disney has been selling flicks on Apple's music site since October 2006, and according to Apple CEO Steve Jobs, they've already been downloaded more than 1.3 million times. Target and Wal-Mart have made noise about being priced out of the race for new release profits because Apple is paying lower wholesale fees. While it's true that Disney's new releases sell for just US\$14.99 on iTunes, these downloads don't come with any of the extras that are exclusive to higher-priced DVDs. But regardless, Paramount's decision to only offer library titles (priced at US\$9.99) may be strategic so as to avoid coming under similar fire from its bricks-and-mortar partners.



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Profiles in programming strategy

It's not all black and white at Canal Panda

by lianne stewart

Given that it acquires about 95% of its schedule, Portugal's Canal Panda should definitely be on the radar of international kids programming distributors. This 10-year-old pay-TV network for kids is available in 1.2 million Portuguese households, and director of programming Isabel Mimoso says the network is the third most watched digital channel in the region after AXN and Sic Noticias.

Despite going up against Cartoon Network in basic cable, Panda's biggest competition comes from terrestrial net RTP2, which airs a block of kids shows throughout its daytime schedule. Although most of the other terrestrials in Portugal have reduced their commitment to children's programming in the last couple of years, Mimoso says pan-European broadcasters will be keeping close tabs on the region this year as a government-led hardware initiative to install digital TV boxes into the majority of Portuguese households plays out.

In the meantime, Canal Panda broadcasts daily from 6 a.m. to 1:30 a.m., flip-flopping between serving preschoolers and core kids for most of the day, and finishing up with a little tween fare at night. The day starts with preschool block O Recreio do Panda, which broadcasts all morning until noon. Then Mega Panda takes over to target schoolkids ages seven to 10 on their two-hour lunchbreak. The sked shifts back to preschool in the afternoon, going after the upper end of the demo until 6 p.m., when Mega Panda resumes for four more hours (minus one hour of preschool at 8:30 p.m.). And before the channel goes dark, it airs two hours of animated and live-action programming for tweens in an unnamed block.

Roughly 40% of the channel's total schedule is acquired from non-European producers,

and the majority of series for core kids come from Japan. Non-violent anime entries such as *Mew Mew Power* (Mega Panda's most popular program) and recent acquisitions *Sakura* and *Sweet Tail of St. Tail* are a good fit because they mirror Mimoso's philosophy of programming with modern appeal and positive values. And

Way for Noddy (Chorion), *Jakers* (Entara/Mike Young Productions) and Icon's *Vitaminix*. The goal is to help educate these viewers as they get ready to start school.

But last month, Mimoso split the block to introduce programming for viewers younger than four from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Shows such as *Harry and his Bucket Full of Dinosaurs* (CCI/Collingwood O'Hare), *Pocoyo* (Granada/Zinkia) and *Cotoons* (Zone 3/Film en Stock) will target these younger eyeballs, and Mimoso plans to look for more zero to four programming when she makes her annual buying pilgrimage to MIPCOM in the fall. Right now, this market is the only professional outing on Mimoso's calendar, but as Canal Panda starts exploring co-productions over the next year, she may also attend Cartoon Forum in September.

Canal Panda is active in producing both animated and live-action interstitials in-house, and Mimoso would like both styles to be represented in her tween block. Elements of mystery and investigation seem to work well with this part of the channel's audience, to which only 5% of the sked is currently devoted.

Series on-air now include *Moville Mysteries* (Nelvana), *The Intrepids* (Marathon) and *Mentors* (Mind's Eye), and these provide a good indication of the type of show Mimoso wants for her oldest viewers.

As for new media, Canal Panda is after mobile rights for new acquisitions in order to feed content into its deals with some of Portugal's top cell phone service providers. Kids who subscribe to Vodaphone and TMN-Optimus are now able to watch the channel on their mobile phones as if they were sitting at home. The initiative only started last month, but Mimoso is keen to keep experimenting in new media to see which technologies stick. **S**



though Canal Panda as a whole skews slightly boy at 51%, she says girls are equally attracted to what tends to be a male-targeted genre because of her anime lineup's gentler tone.

But Mimoso is just as open to looking at other types of programming for her core kid viewers. She recently picked up a whack of series from Spain's Icon Animation, and she expects *Lola & Virginia* to perform well in this block with both boys and girls because it balances action and humor pretty evenly.

Canal Panda's nine hours of daily preschool programming used to focus squarely on four- to six-year-olds, a subset that's still served well by series such as the block's top-rated *Make*



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SmartJog delivers a tapeless back-end

by jocelyn christie

There's no question that the digital media evolution is changing the way we entertain kids in some pretty fundamental ways. But it has also opened up new opportunities for streamlining business operations, particularly when it comes to delivering content. The back end of a distribution deal has traditionally been quite time-consuming and costly, with producers sending tapes by FedEx or DHL, grappling with customs issues remotely, and hoping against hope that their packages will arrive intact to their final destinations. But digital delivery systems make possible a tapeless back-end that could save a lot of time and money in the long term.

One company that's been really proactive about targeting its digital media services to the kids entertainment industry is L.A.-based SmartJog, which partnered with Reed Midem in 2005 to modernize the screenings at MIP Jr. Before SmartJog stepped in, buyers used to check out tapes for the shows they were interested in, view them, and then check them all back in once they were through. It was bulky and time-consuming work, and tapes for hot shows were often unavailable for long stretches. SmartJog digitized the whole shebang, so now buyers sit down at a viewing station and simply call up the shows they want to watch with a click of the mouse. No muss, no fuss, and producers are also able to track viewing by broadcaster instantaneously.

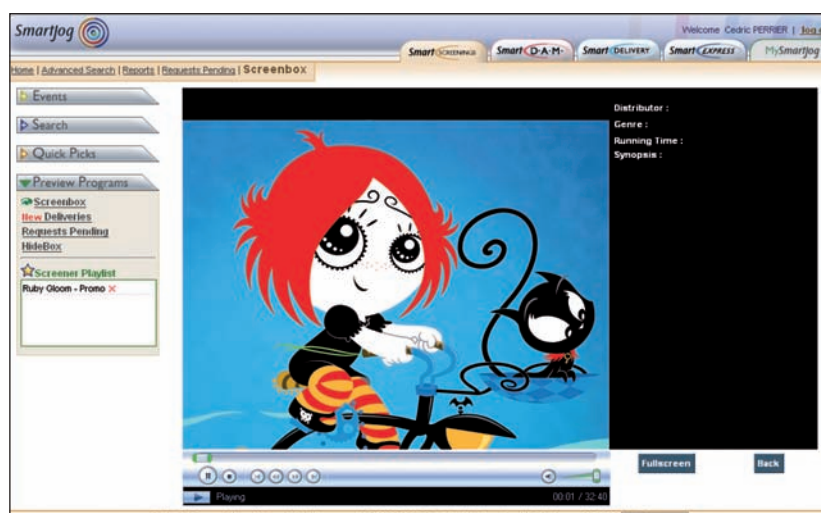
Of course, SmartJog ensured through on-site marketing that it was credited as the harbinger of all this efficiency, and used the opportunity to score meetings with individual companies during MIPCOM. What its sales team was initially selling was space on its digital SmartScreening service, a secure network where distributors post their shows to be viewed all year long by broadcasters and home entertainment companies. The system can be used in one of two ways: distributors either push a file out to a select list of recipients, or they can simply fulfill broadcaster requests for files. Distributors pay only when content is delivered and on a sliding scale depending on file size.

This pricing structure was set up to be comparable to what it costs for normal tape duplication and shipping, so the main short-term benefits of SmartJog are security and time savings. Files are sent out across a closed satellite network (which sets the service apart from internet-based delivery systems), and it's impossible for the transfer to affect the quality of the file. In fact, SmartJog guarantees file integrity.

The real cost savings of SmartJog's services can really only be measured over time, and it's still too soon for many clients to be

seeing a bottom-line difference. But once a file is created, it can be sent again and again with no additional investment, which stands in stark contrast to the traditional fulfillment model that involves endlessly recreating tapes.

On the receiving end are broadcasters, home entertainment companies, vendors, IPTV platforms, dubbing houses, licensees and anyone else who has access to a SmartJog server, which costs around US\$300 a month. Most major channels are on-board, just a few of which include YTV, TF1, RTL TV and Five, and a full list of clients is available on SmartJog's website (www.smartjog.com).



Ruby Gloom studio Nelvana has 40-plus half hours of its content up on SmartJog's screening hub, and has just started using the network to deliver masters

Eastern Europe is one territory that has bought in big-time in order to combat its countries' notoriously difficult customs operations.

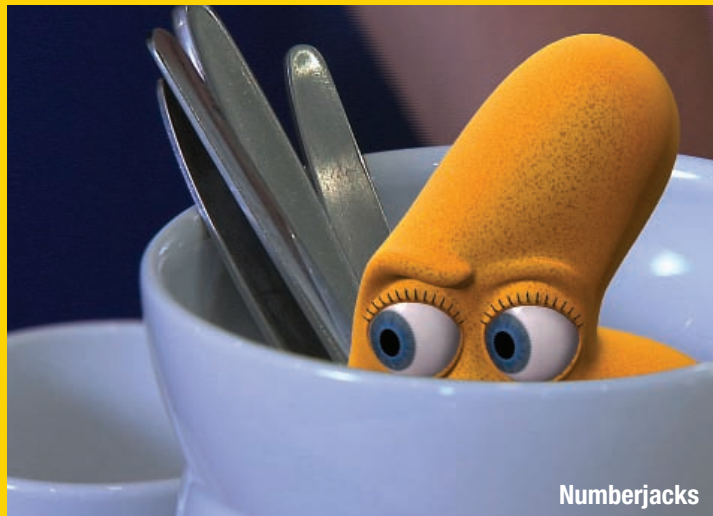
Now that so many servers are installed, director of sales Joe DiBianca says SmartJog's goal is to upsell its existing distributor clients to use the network for delivering master files. Nelvana, which has put 40 half hours of its content up on SmartScreenings over the past two years, recently expanded its relationship with SmartJog in this way. Senior manager of distribution Neal Bilow says SmartDelivery is particularly useful for conducting business with smaller, foreign-language broadcasters because content can be sent directly and quickly to post houses for dubbing.

TV-Loonland is also a SmartScreenings client, and COO Olivier Dumont likes to use the service to screen shows for clients he meets with at industry events. But he's not quite ready to sign up for additional services yet. He says only about 30% of his clients have servers installed, which isn't a big enough base to justify the investment. But if SmartJog could find a way to allow non-subscribing broadcasters to access the system without compromising its security, he'd definitely reconsider. **N**

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WHAT'S IN A NAME? UNEXPECTED ROYALTIES

PERSONALIZED KIDS CD BUSINESS SINGS FOR JUST ME!

by lana castleman

**With more than
750,000 disks sold,
Just Me! wants to
expand its licensed
talent roster in '07**

Just Me! Music has managed to build a thriving business on the notion that there isn't a child out there who wouldn't squeal with delight at the sound of their favorite character singing just to them. Its latest release, *Sing-a-Long With Elmo*, features 30 minutes of the furry red Muppet's song stylings, which can be custom-tailored to any one of 1,800 names. Just Me! president Paul LaRue notes that royalties for this new and unique product are almost like found revenue for licensors, and the even better news is that the company is looking to expand its licensed business and distribution reach this year.

To date, the Franklin, Tennessee-based company has sold more than 750,000 CDs via its network of stand-alone mall kiosks in the U.S. and its website www.justmerecords.com. The chief appeal of the music disks is that Just Me! gets the original voice talent behind the licensed characters in its portfolio, including Elmo's Kevin Clash, to go into the studio and speak or sing each name as many as six times. So the recordings sound so natural that it really does seem like the character is speaking

one-on-one to little Charlotte or Johnny—there isn't a whiff of computer-generated or synthesized content.

Although the company started off in 2003 with just the VeggieTales license driving its business, Elmo, Barney and The Wiggles have since joined in. Next up is a trio of titles from Disney—*A Princess Tea Party*, *Mickey, Minnie and Goofy* and *Pooh & Friends*—launching sometime this quarter. LaRue is interested in acquiring more character and/or kids celebrity licenses, and usually cuts property owners a 10% royalty. Depending on who holds the underlying music rights, he'll license character songs from the original music publisher or get licensors to clear the rights themselves.

As for retail distribution, Just Me! currently has a U.S. network of roughly 300 operators who run the kiosks and burn individual CDs for consumers. But this year, LaRue plans to install small proprietary countertop display units in mall-based toy, stationery and gift shops. Using a touch-screen device, customers will be able to serve themselves. The process should take about five minutes from start to finish, and the consumer will leave with a customized CD that sports a personalized, four-color label with their child's name on it.

The disks carry an SRP of US\$24.95, so LaRue says retailers can make a 40% margin. Just Me! intends to lease the display units to interested outlets for around US\$250 a month, and has placed 12 test-phase units already. The ambitious plan involves finding homes for 2,000 self-serve machines over the next two years. **N**

A tale of two demos

CNE courts kids and teens for Foster's

It's not everyday that a property created for core kids finds a teen following at the same time, but Cartoon Network Enterprises believes it has found just that with Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends. The CN original series created by *PowerPuff Girls* mastermind Craig McCracken seems to be striking a chord with a number of demos, and so the company's consumer products arm is setting out to build a junior girls program.

Mid- and specialty-tier apparel manufacturer Mighty Fine is already on-board, and Christina Miller, VP of consumer products at CNE, is hunting for more apparel and accessories partners to create a broader presence this year.

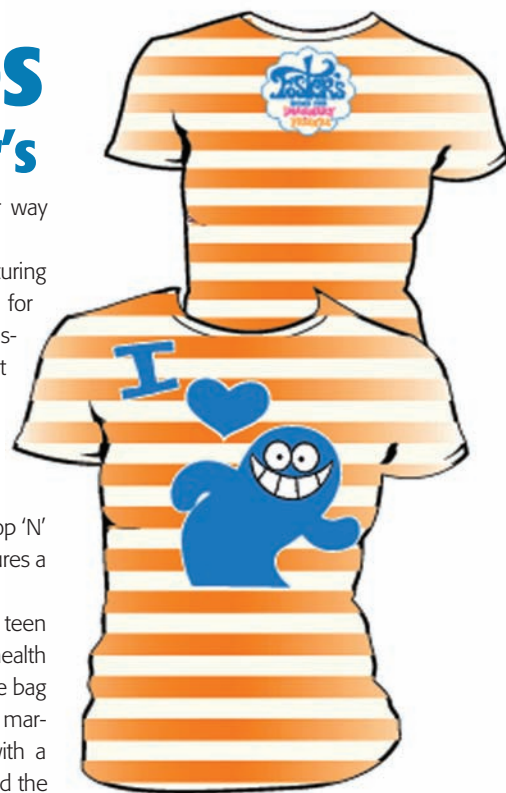
CNE tested teen waters last fall with a young men's T-shirt line from Logotel, which experienced solid sell-through rates at exclusive retailer Hot Topic. Miller is looking at the teen girl market now because the company's quantitative and qualitative research has revealed that both older girls and younger boys like Foster's, which allows for the development of two merchandising programs simultaneously.

"It might be harder if it was the other way around," Miller admits.

As the initial Mighty Fine line featuring knit and fleece tops (US\$25 to US\$60) for teens begins to hit retail this spring, master toy licensee Mattel will be rolling out two SKUs for kids five and up. Trouble Makin' Blooregard R/C (US\$24.99) is an electronic version of Mac's manic sidekick Bloo that moves, spins and can say more than 15 phrases, while the Hoop 'N' Holla Basketball Game (US\$19.99) features a talking Bloo basketball.

Miller is looking to round out Foster's teen girl range with accessories, stationery, health & beauty, electronics accessories and tote bag licensees. And she says the property's marketing push that kicked off in 2006 with a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade float and the November debut of *Good Wilt Hunting* (the Foster's movie) will continue well into 2007.

Since hitting the airwaves in fall 2004, Foster's has built its fan base steadily, and the number of users registered at its year-long



Junior girls tees from Mighty Fine lead Foster's push into the teen girl demo, while Mattel aims toys at kids

online game *Big Fat Awesome House Party* is sitting at around 9.6 million. **LC**

New tech lights up room décor category

If you're looking to add a little sparkle to your licensed product, you might want to talk to Howard Jay Fleischer, president of New York-based licensing and product development agency RoyaltyPros. He introduced toyco Spin Master to the idea of combining a patented LED technology from Boston, Massachusetts' manufacturer Color Kinetics with a glittering plastics material called Sparklex. The resulting Glitter 'n' Glo chair is an innovative take on kids inflatable furniture that undulates with color as it shimmers, and it's sure to catch the eyes of little girls everywhere.

Fleischer is representing both technologies, and while Spin Master has the license to use the combo for kids room décor, he's on the lookout for partners interested in using them both or individually for other applications. Playsets, toy vehicles, portable electronics and hand

bags are just some of the products Fleischer believes suit the patented technologies.

Color Kinetics developed the system that allows LEDs to subtly change color and emit light along a spectrum to spotlight architectural features on building exteriors. So instead of flashing lights and abrupt colors, the Kinetics system changes seamlessly from one hue to the next—moving from pink, to purple, to white, for example. Meanwhile, Sparklex is a plastic material containing tiny prisms that catch and reflect light, putting the two together creates a consistent, shimmery glow. Fleischer adds that the tech does increase manufacturing costs, but not enough to price products out of the mass retail market.

For its part, Spin Master is rolling out the Glitter 'n' Glow Disney Princess chair (US\$19.99) to Wal-Mart stores across the U.S. this spring, and is currently looking at incorporating the tech into more of its décor line. **LC**



Spin Master's Glitter 'n' Glow sparkles with subtle color



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News in Brief



Skelanimals are both cute and spooky

Rocket Licensing launches into U.K. kids biz

U.K. licensing industry vets Charlie Donaldson and Rob Wijeratna are hanging their own shingle on a new boutique agency called Rocket Licensing. The pair met at BBC Worldwide some 10 years ago, and after their most recent stints at Granada Ventures and Entertainment Rights, respectively, they determined there was room in the U.K. market for smaller, focused licensing agencies. In addition to having acquired a number of adult lifestyle brands, Rocket was on the brink of picking up a new preschool entertainment brand at press time, and the goal is to add one more in the months ahead.

On the tween girl front, Rocket has just been granted rights in the U.K. and Ireland to publishing/art property Skelanimals from Art Impressions. With the tagline "Dead animals need love too," the brand is about to roll out chain-wide at Hot Topic stores in the U.S. with a line of apparel and accessories that straddles the line between Goth and cute. In terms of plans across the pond, Wijeratna says Rocket is looking to land apparel, accessories and mobile partners for an initial launch later this year.

Shaun the Sheep herds a pack of international partners

Since its debut as the most-screened show at MIPCOM Jr. last fall, Aardman Animations' stop-motion series *Shaun the Sheep* has been busily adding to its flock of broadcasters and consumer products partners. France's TF1 has acquired all rights in the territory, including broadcast, home video and L&M, while Sony Creative Products will be heading up TV and merch sales in Japan. And in Scandinavia, licensing agency Alicom will be brokering deals for the silent sheep, while Nordisk Film handles home video distribution.



PROPERTY LISTING

Licenses recently granted

Property	Granted by	Granted to	Product category	Demo	Release date
Ben 10	Cartoon Network Enterprises	FAB/Starpoint	backpacks, accessories, school supplies, watches, clocks	kids	Q3 2007
Bratz	MGA Entertainment	Rubie's Costume	costumes, costume accessories	girls	Q3 2007
Di-Gata Defenders Bakugan	Nelvana	Spin Master	master toy	boys	March 2007 fall 2007
Jay Jay the Jet Plane	PorchLight Entertainment	Brainytoys	electronic/remote-control toys, computer/plug-and-play games	preschool	Q2 2007
Horseland	DIC Entertainment	Scanbox (Scandinavia) ZDF (German-speaking territories) FMG (Dutch-speaking Benelux)	DVDs	girls six to 12	Q4 2007
Roary the Racing Car	Chapman Entertainment	Trade Mark Collections (U.K.) DNC (U.K.) Aykroyds (U.K.) TDP Licensing (U.K.) Character World (U.K.) Blueprint Collections (U.K.) Worlds Apart (U.K.)	bags tableware, lunchbags nightwear underwear bedding stationery bedroom accessories	preschool boys	spring 2008
Shuriken School	Xilam	CITEL (French-speaking regions) Hâchette Jeunesse (France) FOPEM (France)	series-based vids/DVDs, 75-minute direct-to-video books pyjamas, apparel	kids	Q3 2007 spring 2007 summer 2007
Viva Piñata	4Kids Entertainment	DecoPac Rubie's Costume Unique Industries	cake/baking decorations costumes piñatas, foil balloons	kids	fall 2007
Yummi-Land	MGA Entertainment	Kids Headquarters Franco Saramax Mead DecoPac	apparel, swimwear bedding, bath towels/décor, beach towels/blankets, throws, pillow sets, decorative pillows, sand chairs, outdoor mats, vinyl placemats nightgowns, nightshirts, PJs, robes calendars baking goods	girls	fall 2007/spring 2008

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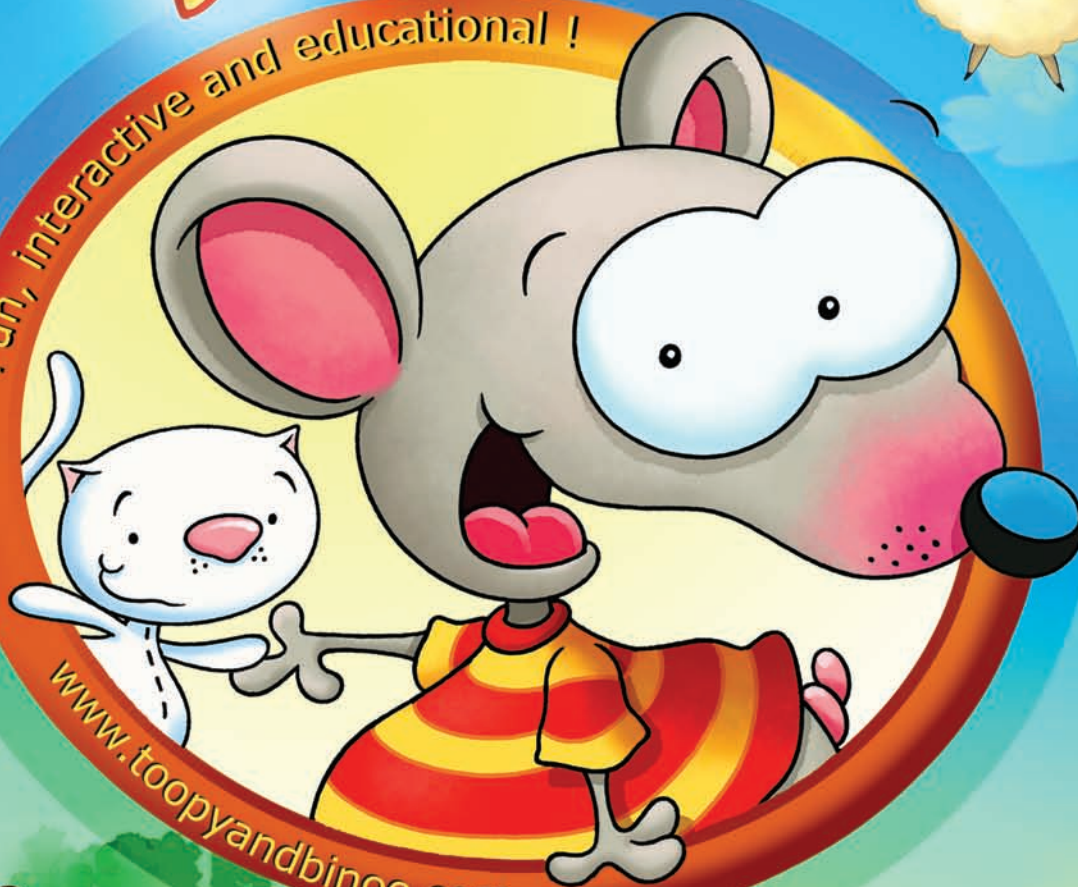
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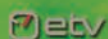
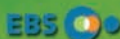


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NIGHT-NIGHT GETS MADE OVER WITH MP3 TECH

by kate calder

Parents can shuffle
lullabies and record
original tracks with
Playskool's new
cribside MP3 player

Playskool's latest line of baby products is going high-tech to target first-gen i-Pod users, who've just tipped into the parenting bracket. Since the MP3 movement is all about customization, this consumer hook will be the bedrock of the Made For Me line when it rolls out in the fall.


The player in the MP3-compatible toys has a preloaded library that includes 50 original recordings of baby-friendly classics like

"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," and tracks can be shuffled and organized by category just like on an iPod. But more importantly, parents can download their own favorite tracks from CDs and the internet—and even record themselves singing lullabies—to create a personalized audio experience for their baby.

Made For Me's hallmark product, the digital music player (US\$79.99), attaches to cribs and is designed to send wee ones off to sleep at home each night. But since a good night's rest for

many babes depends on following the same bedtime ritual every night, the product's player also slides out of the crib attachment, making overnight visits to grandma's house and vacations much more restful for all involved.

The line rounds out with two more products, which are compatible with the Made For Me MP3 player but not sold with it. The Day to Dream Soother (US\$34.99) is a mini projector that broadcasts animated images and light shows on the ceiling, with different settings for bedtime and playtime. And the 2-in-1 Infant Gym (US\$39.99) is an activity play mat featuring lights, mirrors and sound effects that can be programmed to suit a baby's unique play patterns.

Playskool partnered with Singapore-based digital products company Creative to develop the line, which it will market through platforms that connect with prenatal moms, such as the online baby registries common at Babies 'R' Us, Wal-Mart and Target. Although the advertising plan hasn't been completely nailed down, Playskool VP of marketing Kevin Fortey expects the line will have a strong presence on babycenter.com, a heavily trafficked website for moms with which the toyco already has a strong relationship. 

Little League takes a swing at catalogue sales with Avon

Through a new licensing deal with women's mail-order beauty retailer Avon, Little League Baseball (LLB) is putting some of its gift merchandise in the direct path of moms, aunts and grandmothers this summer. Starting with watches by Avon, bags and backpacks from Accessory Network and pyjamas from MjC/Logotel, the product line will be featured in 60 million brochures and pushed by Avon's 500,000 U.S. sales reps.

LLB director of licensing Jud Rogers says the deal is the league's first-ever catalogue sales effort, and it's very much a trial balloon to test the potential of this distribution path. Various LLB licensed products are available through other retail channels, including Wal-Mart and Target, and a hefty chunk of apparel sales happen on the league's own website. But the company doesn't have a sole retail partner for its complete line, which Rogers is very much open to considering.



Avon's Little League watches to debut in a baseball issue this June

The partners narrowed in on gift merch because it's appropriate for Avon's customer base and because it fulfills LLB's goal of connecting with parents and grandparents and involving them in the Little League experience. The products will debut in the Avon catalogue that goes out on Father's Day, which also coincides with the beginning of the Little League season. Avon plans to make baseball the focus for this issue, including adult-targeted products centered around the sport as well.

Though Avon is best known as a peddler of cosmetics, it has been carrying watches and jewelry for 35 years. Lana Aledort, the company's director of marketing in these categories, says more than half of Avon's revenue comes from non-cosmetic products including giftables, home décor and apparel & accessories. Avon is certainly no stranger to kids merchandise, featuring watches and apparel sporting Nickelodeon and Disney characters as part of its regular stock. After the Father's Day splash, LLB products will be featured in Avon's catalogues indefinitely, and Aledort says expanding the range to include merch from other licensees is definitely a possibility if the first phase hits one out of the park. **KC**

News in Brief

Blockbuster sells Rhino to rival chain

In a robust market buoyed by the recent release of new consoles, two of the video game category's major distribution outlets are expanding with specialized retail models. First off, Blockbuster has sold Rhino Video Games to Grapevine, Texas-based GameStop in order to focus on its core gaming rental service, which have gotten a whole lot busier with the release of PS3, Wii and Xbox 360 in the past two years. But the rental giant hasn't abandoned game sales altogether. It still operates Game Rush stores in 450 U.S. Blockbuster locations, where customers can buy, sell and trade games and stock up on accessories and hardware.

Based in the Southeastern states, the 72 Rhino outlets will be re-branded over the year as GameStop stores, which have an almost identical selling and trading MO. The acquisition widens GameStop's footprint to 4,700 locations in 15 countries, with 3,700 stores in the U.S. alone.

Though both retailers' core consumer target is males between the ages of 15 and 35, engaging younger customers is definitely a secondary goal. GameStop has a steady stream of kids who come in looking to trade a handful of old games for one hot new release. And Blockbuster's VP of games merchandising, Rod Murray, says the new platforms—especially Wii—are supported by more family-based games that appeal to kids.



American kids will get to know Brit classic *Rupert Bear* on DVD

ER does DVD biz with a friend of a friend

Entertainment Rights is introducing its British characters to American kids on DVD through a new partnership with Genius Products. The LA.-based company will distribute key ER brands such as Postman Pat, Rupert Bear and Jim Jam & Sunny through its retail partners, which include Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Target, Toys 'R' Us, Barnes & Noble, Blockbuster and Amazon. ER, meanwhile, will continue to control packaging and oversee all marketing for the DVDs.

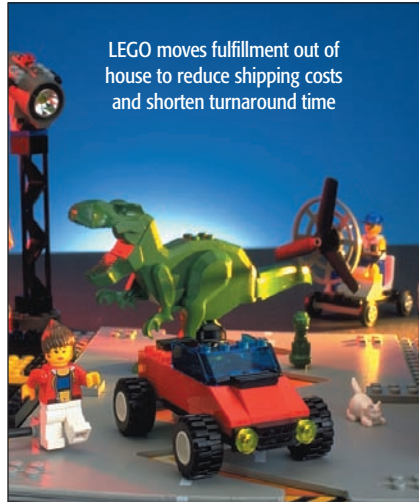
Genius had a tight relationship with Classic Media, which ER officially acquired in January, so this new deal is very much a natural side-effect of the buyout. ER CEO Mike Heap feels that building U.S. exposure for the company's properties through home entertainment might lead to network broadcast deals. He says plans are now in the works to secure additional licensing and publishing partners, and talks are underway to produce a major motion picture based on a yet-to-be-named ER property.

LEGO finds greater fulfillment in outsourcing

LEGO's direct-to-consumer division, LEGO Brand Retail, has just taken a big load off its shoulders by inking a five-year deal with Plano, Texas-based fulfillment company PFSWeb.

Starting at the end of March, all direct-to-consumer online orders for LEGO product will be picked up at the shopping cart stage by PFSWeb, which will then locate inventory, email status information to customers, and follow through with North American shipping from its 2.5-million-square-foot warehouse. The deal also covers orders from LEGO's catalogue, which goes out to between 750,000 and a million homes eight times a year.

Based on LEGO's experience handling fulfillment in-house, PFSWeb chairman and CEO Mark Layton expects to handle thousands of orders each day, with business naturally peaking in the holiday lead-up, which



LEGO moves fulfillment out of house to reduce shipping costs and shorten turnaround time

he says accounts for about 50% of the toyco's direct sales. This past Q4, traffic to LEGO's online store increased by 120%, according to Nielsen/NetRatings for LEGO.com.

Layton says that LEGO wants to reduce the cost of shipping small, low-weight orders, as well as shortening its product turnaround time during peak seasons.

Being able to cater to unpredictable consumer demand was a key goal for LEGO, says Skip Kodak, the company's VP of direct-to-consumer. "Once the transition is made, we'll have better flexibility to chase demand and ultimately provide as much LEGO as the market requests," says Kodak.

Though LEGO's difficulties in keeping up with retail demand made headlines in December, the company claims the decision to outsource its supply chain functions was in the works well before the holiday season.

In a related move, LEGO has hired separate companies to handle packing/warehousing and the distribution of finished goods to retail. **KC**

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marketing



JETIX'S KIDOMETER GAUGES NEW MEDIA HEAT IN EUROPE

by lianne stewart

**A new kids lifestyle
bible pinpoints the
best marketing tools
for reaching Europe's
challenging children**

advertisers target their marketing dollars.

Jean-Paul Wevers, sales director at Jetix, says the study was conceived in response to clients' requests for a Pan-Euro snapshot of kids' lifestyles. Among other subtopics, *Kidometer* takes a look at defining cool, how kids spend their leisure time, how they use non-linear devices, and who makes the buying decisions in their homes. Each country is represented by 500 kids ages seven to 15, with a 50/50 gender split.

Perhaps the most important finding from the inaugural issue of *Kidometer*, which was published in December, is the indication that high-tech equipment is more valuable to kids than clothes or toys. "Technology, and knowing about upcoming tech, is fast becoming a way of making oneself popular on the playground, especially amongst boys," Wevers says. When kids in the U.K., Poland and Denmark were asked which possession

Have you ever been stymied by the prospect of getting your brand message across in Europe, where each country's kids are as unique as the local cuisine? Well, Jetix has come to the rescue with *Kidometer*, a new biannual study that takes an in-depth look at the lifestyle habits of kids living in every territory the broadcaster beams into, helping kids

is most important to them, for example, about 20% responded with mobile phones and 18% with game consoles, while toys and clothes fell in the 4% to 9% range.

Of course, the penetration of multimedia devices differs in each European market. In Denmark, 21% of kids prized their mobile phones over everything else, which is logical, says Jetix head of research Vickey Hardy, considering that 90% of the Nordic population owns a cell phone. By comparison, France has a 60% mobile phone penetration, which may explain why kids there don't value these devices as much as their Nordic counterparts. But another contributing factor may be the tendency of French children to use their parents' phones and prepaid phone credits. Overall, Hardy says girls are more likely than boys to glom onto mobile technology. "They're really driving the importance of phones for kids," she says.

Girls are also quite keen on gaming, which may represent another effective marketing stream for pan-European media planners. Game consoles topped out as the most valued possession of kids in the U.K., Spain and France, territories that have a higher household penetration of current-generation systems such as PS2 and GameCube. But there's equal excitement across the board for the next wave of hardware. When *Kidometer's* research was underway, Nintendo's Wii and Sony's PS3 hadn't yet hit European retail, but Hardy says the study's respondents indicated a strong desire to own these new platforms, too.

"Kidometer" continued on page 54

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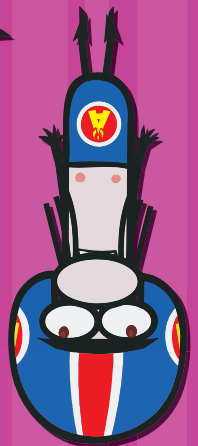
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Nat Geo targets preschoolers with mag spin-off

Nat Geo's kids magazine business is about to double in size next month, with the launch of *National Geographic Little Kids* for the three to six set. The new title has been in the works for two years, and its editorial strategy was developed with input from four different preschool consultants. The book goes heavy on images from Nat Geo's vast stock library, and its simple stories center around animals, foreign cultures and nature, touching on themes a preschooler can relate to. For example, the first issue includes a feature about a baby panda exploring its relationship with its mother and growing up.

Responding to regular reader requests for younger-skewing material, Nat Geo first conceived *Little Kids* as a spin-off from *National Geographic Kids*, a 29-year-old monthly pub that courts readers in the six to 14 age range.

A baby sister in almost every respect, *Little Kids* sports a smaller format at 6.5 x 7 inches and is printed on thicker stock, both of which are easier for little hands to handle. The title will compete against U.S. preschool magazines including *Your Big Backyard* and *Ladybug*, although its focus on geography, wildlife and culture is unique in the space.

NG Little Kids won't initially include ads because it needs to build its circulation first. The kick-off issue will go out to 50,000 kids, and the bi-monthly mag sells for US\$15 a year, or US\$3.95 per issue on newsstands. VP and publisher of *NG Kids* Rainer Jenss says he'll consider accepting a limited number of ads down the road once it can guarantee its circ on a rate card and research client demand more effectively. Editor Melina



With smaller dimensions and sturdier pages, *NG Little Kids* is designed specifically for toddlers

Bellows says the company may sell ads targeted at parents on a website that's continually evolving and already features info for parents, simple activities for kids and downloadable coloring book pages and mazes.

An early direct-mail campaign to an amalgamated list of *National Geographic* subscribers and young parents garnered a 6.5% response rate in subscriptions. Bellows says binding cards inserted in *National Geographic*

have also been performing well, particularly with grandparents giving subscriptions as gifts.

Though Bellows admits *NG Kids* readers don't always graduate to the adult mainstay, the kids magazines do help refresh the Nat Geo brand. "*Little Kids* makes *National Geographic* relevant again," she says. "Parents in their 30s and 40s think of *their* parents getting the magazine, realize *they* are now those adults, and subscribe." **KC**

"Kidometer" continued from page 51

Wevers points to the new status of the gaming console in the family home as one of *Kidometer's* most intriguing findings. These platforms are no longer relegated to the second television in the basement. Instead, the game console is now firmly entrenched in the home entertainment unit, stored right beside the DVD player and stereo. "Console gaming is becoming a medium in its own right, and for advertisers, it's an avenue that needs to be explored," he says.

But despite the appeal that new technology holds for European kids, television still plays a central role in their lives. On

average, 86% of kids chose the linear screen as their favorite place to see advertisements. Future issues of *Kidometer* will keep a close eye on the market position of both TV and digital media, with research for the May edition beginning next month. Hardy anticipates that the study will begin to track behaviors and attitudes in the years to come.

The December version of *Kidometer* is available for purchase now at a price of US\$18,700, and both waves together cost US\$33,500. Anyone interested in getting their hands on a copy should contact Wevers (jean-paul.wevers@jetix.net). **NS**

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marketing

Girl brands embrace the fine arts

Two high-profile girls properties are strengthening their ties to renowned arts communities and building brand associations with the high-end elegance of ballet and classical music in the process.

In support of a new Angelina Ballerina DVD and publishing program rolling out this year, HIT Entertainment's dancing mouse will make guest appearances at matinee performances of the American Ballet Theater, starting in March. A costumed character will greet ballet-goers in the lobby, showing off her amateur pliés and arabesques, and posing with kids for photos. Angelina DVDs, books and T-shirts will also be available for sale at performances.

Meanwhile, across the pond, Angelina will take the stage with a cast of eight dancers from the English National Ballet in more than 100 live performances scheduled over 12 weeks in 20 venues across the U.K. After



each show, kids will have the opportunity to take part in an Angelina Ballerina Dance Academy class.

The new DVD, *Angelina Ballerina: Angelina Follows Her Dreams*, bows in April, and Penguin Young Readers Group is releasing more than 15

Angelina titles this year, including *My First Ballet Class* in January and *Let's Dance* in May.

While Angelina limbers up at the ballet, Barbie will be the star of several symphony dates in '07. Partnering orchestras around the world will play scores from Barbie's Princess direct-to-videos (including classical compositions by Tchaikovsky and Beethoven), while scenes from the movies are broadcast overhead on a big screen. The show debuts at the Columbus Symphony this month, before embarking on a global tour for the rest of the year.

Barry Waldo, senior director of entertainment marketing and strategy at Mattel, says the company may sell Barbie merch at performances if audience feedback indicates enough demand. In the meantime, the toyco is working with each symphony to conduct TV and radio contests and direct marketing campaigns with season ticket-holders **KC**



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Catching a ride on The Long Tail

by doug murphy

The Long Tail is fast becoming a mainstream moniker in the content and distribution business, and we also hear a lot about Web 2.0. But how do we make sense of all this jargon, and more importantly, how does it impact us in the kids entertainment industry?

Let's start by de-mystifying the terms a little. Web 2.0 is analogous to what was referred to as "convergence" at the peak of the tech bubble, and it also includes a number of other emerging behaviors such as social-networking, crowd-sourcing and user-generated content. But unlike a few years ago, it's actually happening this time, spurred on by three significant factors.

The first is broadband penetration. In most of the developed world, households with broadband connectivity now make up more than 50% of the population. Industry prognosticators also expect a new personal computer upgrade cycle since the PC in the average home is more than three years old. More powerful PCs that are broadband-connected should create a big new market for kids content owners and producers.

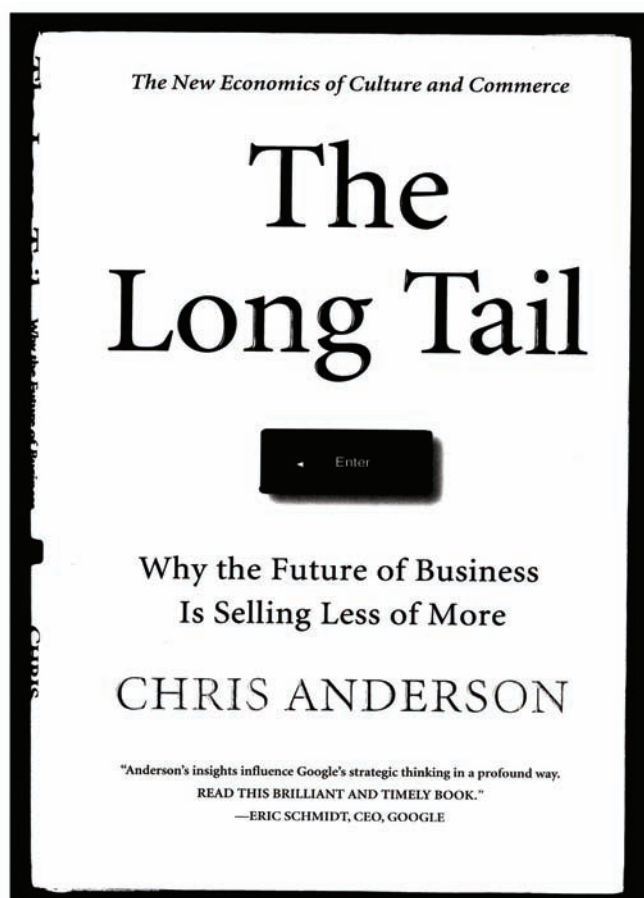
The second factor centers around digital rights management (DRM), which is our ability to protect the valuable content we own from web denizens who might want to pirate our shows. Content can now be encrypted and encoded or "wrapped" in a variety of DRMs. This makes content portability via the web a viable opportunity.

The final development is the appearance of a multitude of new platforms and appliances. The iPod gets credit for connecting supply with demand in the music business, and it is now trying to morph into a home for video content. But there are many more gadgets (Xbox 360, PS3, cell phones, PSPs) and platforms (YouTube, Vista, Metacafe, SonyConnect, Azureus, etc.) that enable our audience to consume content when and where they want to.

These events have culminated to create an exciting new direct-to-consumer marketplace for content: Enter The Long Tail. Chris Andersen, editor of *Wired* magazine and author of *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, is credited with coining the term, and I find a before-and-after approach helps when it comes to understanding its impact.

Before, a content owner/producer typically had to go through a series of gates to reach an audience. The gatekeepers included broadcasters, DVD distributors, master toy companies and retailers. Securing real estate on TV or in stores was very difficult because it was expensive. If a show didn't drive ratings or a DVD/toy didn't achieve its minimum sell-through, it was moved out of the limelight to make way for another product. The cost of space in this linear world has helped explain what we know as the self-propagating 80/20 rule: 20% of the items will drive 80% of the economic returns.

Now let's take a look at the *after* scenario. A content producer/owner is now presented with the wonders of infinite, no-cost space on the web, with no gatekeepers! Andersen cites countless examples of how the sizing of an economic market increases significantly when niche demand can be connected to niche supply. The lesson for content owners is to realize that there's a whole new market out there.



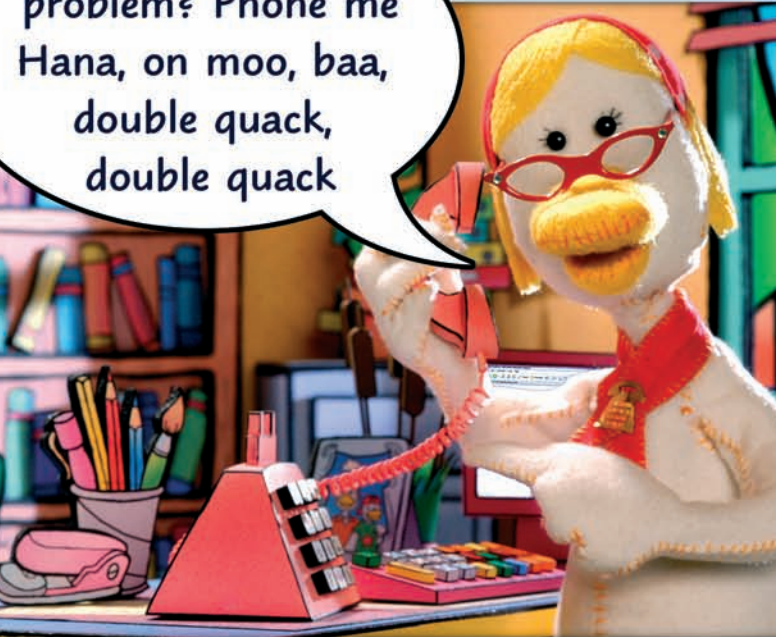
Consider the opportunities for those with good libraries of content versioned in multiple languages. In most cases, depending on the age of the series, these assets are inert, earning little money with third-window renewals on smaller international broadcasters. Consider taking one show and making it available in every language already versioned in your library to any consumer in the world. It's not hard to figure out that this market will soon rival in economic terms what we have known in the *before* world. Here's how I believe content companies can best exploit Long Tail opportunities.

"Long Tail" continued on page 60

I was too tall
to play hide and
seek until Hana
helped me



Got a
problem? Phone me
Hana, on moo, baa,
double quack,
double quack



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"Long Tail" continued from page 59

1. Know what you have. Invest in a rights management system so that you can determine available inventory. Most companies have yet to make this critical investment.
2. Be a student and study the space. Use Google Alert to get notification of developments in the direct-to-consumer world. Everyday, there is a new deal out there.



Nelvana president
Doug Murphy

3. Develop a dance card of partners. In any emerging market, there are many new players. Get to know all of them, get their term sheets, study their business models, and prioritize your activities.
4. Do deals. Get your content out there, but insist upon a marketing plan and do your best to maintain pricing control.

Here's wishing all of us much newfound prosperity as we explore The Long Tail in the coming years. **N**

As president of Nelvana Enterprises, Doug Murphy is already exploring Long Tail opportunities for his company's 3,000-hour catalogue. If you'd like to hear more about how these market shifts will play out in kids entertainment, Murphy will be moderating a panel about the future of electronic sell-through at the KidScreen Summit later this month.

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Toy Fair '07

Tackling tweens 2.0

Toycos try toy/web hybrids to attract eight to 12s

by lana castleman

Those of you who are about to stroll through the corridors at Javits during Toy Fair might want to prepare yourselves for something you haven't experienced in a while. This could be the year that the KAGOY (Kids Are Getting Older Younger) shift is cause for celebration rather than mourning. While toycos tried to beat the US\$150-billion consumer electronics industry at its own game with toytronics in 2006, this year many have adopted an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" stance that relies more on their chief strength as creators of engrossing play patterns than on their experience as makers of electronic devices. Several have created a new category of product that meshes physical toys with online gameplay, and with the rate at which tweens are flocking to the internet for casual gaming, they just may be on to something.

Kids are online and spending for games

According to research firm eMarketer's October 2006 study *Teens & Tweens Online*, roughly 10.5 million kids ages eight to 11 are regularly online, with web gaming ranking as the number-one activity for nine-year-olds (56%). Similarly, *Kids & Digital Content*, a new report from Port Washington, New York's The NPD Group, indicates that downloading games is the biggest activity for kids two to 14, and a full 44% get their games on Yahoo!Games. Furthermore, though it's believed that lack of credit card access is impeding the development of paid sites for kids, the report found that 55% of kid computer users pay for content. This bodes well for these new toys that will be purchased at retail and accompanied by complimentary immersive websites.

"It makes so much sense to take what's engaging about the internet and incorporate it with a physical toy," says Anita Frazier, industry analyst for toys & games at NPD. The key to success, she says, is that toycos entering the space will have to strike a balance between high-tech bells and whistles and the developmental stage of the target demo. Preschoolers, for example, are limited by their dexterity and inability to read. Make no mistake: Kids as young as two are online, but Frazier notes that if the item is too complicated, it will occupy more of the parents' time than the child's. "Parents won't want to do it," she says. "They want to set the child up on the computer once, and then leave them be." And with older kids, until they reach age 11 or so, they're only really interested in gaming. Spending too much time developing social-networking components, à la MySpace, Habbo Hotel and Club Penguin, may be lost on the core crowd.

The other plus about these toys that primarily tap into the web via standard USB ports and cables is the retailer remains a vital part of the equation, and consequently, the product might garner more shelf space. Whether it's Wal-Mart or Best Buy, mass retailers aren't currently a part of the online casual game market that, according to research gathered by Hasbro's Tiger Electronics, is growing year-on-year by 18% and should hit US\$990 million by 2009. As these relatively low-priced playthings—ranging from US\$5 to US\$49



Radica's urban-inspired Funkeys (top) unlocks web worlds, while Girlz Connect Destiny (left) from Bandai will help tweens get to know their personalities via online quizzes

ToyFair '07

at the highest end—will only be available through retailers, it's a way for them to get in on some of the action.

Toycos line up to get wired

So what do North American toycos have up their sleeves? L.A.'s MGA Entertainment was early to market with Miuchiz, which launched late last July. The toy has both a portable handheld and online component, and is centered on virtual pet gameplay; it's also separately targeted to boys and girls as it offers individual worlds based on Bratz, Monsters and Paws (cats and dogs). So kids can travel with Bratz on their handheld, keeping their customizable characters healthy and happy, and then plug the device into a PC to open up an extensive virtual environment online that includes casual games, a place to "buy" virtual accessories for their character and limited social-networking capabilities.

Gary Kanazawa, MGA's GM of interactive and electronic games, says the number of online registrations for the device has doubled every month since Miuchiz launched, and children who don't even own the handheld are trying to become part of the web world. The plan now, he says, is to let those kids have limited access to the site so that they can experience the toy and hopefully convert into handheld users. And a second version of Miuchiz that may prove more enticing is in the works. The number of games will increase tenfold, and some will be rendered as 3-D multiplayer titles; the online mall will add more services, such as a hair salon where characters can get new hairstyles and hair colors; and finally, the social functions will expand beyond simple chat to let kids send each other e-cards and cooperate in online treasure hunts organized by MGA.

Over at Playmates Toys in Costa Mesa, California, the master toy licensee for Microsoft and 4Kids Entertainment's Viva Piñata is one-upping the model by adding a collectible figure to the mix—did we mention it's a figure embedded with an intuitive microchip?

The lead toy is more like a network of components. Proprietary J-Sync technology weaves together the figures, the handheld Party Port, Viva Piñata website and same-titled Xbox game—they will all interact with each other when the toys launch this fall. The line will go out with 24 figures based on Piñata characters (US\$7.99 to US\$9.99 apiece, depending on rarity), and they'll house a J-Sync chip that turns them into digital trading cards, each with distinct characteristics and Party Points value. Players can then wave their figures over the screen on the Party Port (SRP US\$49.99) and transfer the digital info. Once entered into the device, characters can become part of battling games, and then via a USB hookup, the info can be transferred to the Piñata microsite. Once there, kids will be able to collect



Users of MGA's Miuchiz handhelds get to enter rich 3-D web worlds (top), and Playmates Toys' Viva Piñata Party Port will offer no less than five levels of interactivity, including a direct link with the property's Xbox 360 game

more points by playing casual games, as well as adorning their avatars with accessories.

What guilds the lily with the Piñata line is that the Party Port has the ability to synch up with the Xbox game itself. Not only will users be able to open up cheats in the console game, but when they wave a character over the port, it will appear in the console game sporting the accessories that the physical figure has on, closing the loop between toy and interactive gameplay. And upping its marketing potential, the Party Port will function like a retail scanner that reads special Piñata-coded labels. Kids can earn bonus points by scanning, and packaged goods partners and retailers will get more exposure.

Radica, which is now part of the Mattel family, has taken the original IP route and created Funkeys, a line of urban-inspired vinyl figures (US\$4.99) that plug into a larger starter kit (US\$19.99) and connect to a proprietary website and rich virtual world. Chris Wilson, VP of marketing, says the time has finally come for these types of toys. Back in 1998, he notes, a crop of internet-based toys debuted at Toy Fair. "Those toys failed so miserably that if you showed up with one the next year, you were a fool..." he says. "But kids' use of the internet has caught up with the plans from eight years ago."

And since the social-networking aspect of the internet is a big pull for chatty, chatty girls, you can expect that Bandai's Girlz Connect Destiny device won't be alone for long. The toyco is putting to work the lessons learned with its successful relaunch of Tamagotchi in 2004. Headed onto version 4.5, the virtual pet and its tamagotchitown.com continue to add more play value. According to director of marketing Colleen Sherfy, the website averaged 75,000 visitors per day in December, and the new edition will add more games, interaction and opportunities to earn sought-after Gotchi points that kids can use to further customize their pets and habitats.

Targeting girls eight and up, Destiny bypasses the pets and gets straight to the socializing. Girls can use the device to take quizzes and then go to its website and create new quizzes to download back

"Tackling Tweens 2.0" continued on page 72



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LICENSING ONE ON ONE WITH GARY CAPLAN



Late last fall, licensing luminary and LIMA Hall of Fame member Gary Caplan stopped by Neil Friedman's office in Mattel's El Segundo, California HQ for a chat. In this fourth installment of our six-part series, the president of Mattel Brands discusses his first encounter with the licensing business, his biggest product disappointment, and how the company plans to follow up 2006's hottest toy, T.M.X. Elmo.



Gary Caplan: *Thank you very much for meeting me today, I've been looking forward to this for a long time. Why don't you tell me a bit about your background?*

Neil Friedman: Thanks Gary, glad to be here. I was born in Brooklyn, New York and spent most of my life in Philadelphia. I went to school at Rider University...When I graduated, Sears offered me a management training position. I left Sears [a few years later] and went to work for Porter Hosiery as its New England manager, and I ran 13 stores. I was there for a year and a half. [My family] wanted to move back to New Jersey, so I answered an ad in July of 1972 from a retailer named Lionel Leisure, Kiddy City. That was my start in the toy industry.

How long were you at Lionel Leisure?

Ten years. I went from department manager trainee to senior merchandise manager, eventually, and I left in 1982 to work for Hasbro.

Who was your first boss at Hasbro?

Larry Bernstein. He was head of sales, and I was Eastern regional sales manager. I did that for about six weeks and then they made me

president of this small import company called Aviva. It was only doing a couple of million dollars a year, mostly Snoopy toys. Hasbro bought Knickerbocker that November, and Alan and Stephen Hassenfeld (who were heading up Hasbro) gave it to me to integrate with Aviva. We rolled the whole thing into Hasbro in the mid-'80s, and I started the inbound licensing department. The company didn't have one until then; it was whoever happened to be in marketing services. That's really how I became heavily involved in the licensing industry, getting into contracts and negotiations, meeting with all the licensors, and picking products.

You mentioned some industry heavyweights and some terrific people. Can you think of a particular boss that left an indelible impression on you?

I think Stephen probably left an indelible impression on a lot of us. He was incredibly savvy on making financial decisions and acquisitions, and he was smart about how to deal with people. Although he was a little rough sometimes, he was pretty straightforward, which I always found refreshing.

Along those lines, can you think of the best business advice you ever received and how it has impacted your professional life?

The best business advice I ever got was you should always surround yourself with great people, because no one person can do every job themselves. But if you surround yourself with great people and you teach them to do your job, the better they become, the better you look.

Great answer! When can I go and work for you? Changing tack a bit, in 2004, you were inducted into the prestigious Toy Industry Hall of Fame. How did you feel when you got the phone call from the TIA?

Actually, I was standing out in the hallway of the TIA. At that time, I was the chairman. So I didn't know that I had been placed in the nominations and it had been put out to the membership to vote. When I got the call that I was elected, I was ecstatic.

So looking at your time in the toy business, I'm sure that you consider Tickle Me Elmo and its subsequent versions over the years as one of your greatest successes. How did you and your Fisher-Price team come up with the original concept and the product?

When I started at Tyco Preschool in August of 1995 (Editor's note: Tyco merged with Mattel in 1997, Fisher-Price became its

sole preschool brand in 1998), Tickle Me Elmo was already in the works. An inventor had presented a laughing, giggling monkey to Stan Clutton, who was, at the time, head of marketing and design. But Tyco Preschool didn't have any soft toy rights, so he sent it to the division with the Looney Tunes license, which tried to do a Tickle Me Taz. Then Tyco did a master toy deal with Sesame slated to begin in January 1996. Having the master toy rights included soft toys, so Stan put the mechanism into Elmo. Our advertising agency said, 'This is really a great toy...But TV is a visual medium, and he doesn't do any-

hand puppet and was really magical. It was the first toy that did branching, where you could talk to it and it seemed like it was answering your questions...It was terrific, everybody loved it. The only problem was children couldn't work the toy, [and] it wasn't satisfying for them to play with. So the things we learned from it are a) puppets are not generally good for kids because the child can't do it, the parent can; b) don't fall in love with a toy because you are amazed with the electronics—just because they can do all of these things doesn't mean that they're fun; c) make sure a child can handle the toy before you sell it.

If you look at T.M.X. today, it's when he falls down and slaps his knee and rolls over. We think of that as technology; to a child it's magic and it brings the toy to life and brings a smile to everybody's face. That's the wow factor...If they [want to] play with it over and over again, then we've succeeded.

"IF YOU LOOK AT T.M.X. TODAY, THE WOW FACTOR COMES FROM WHEN HE FALLS DOWN. AND SLAPS HIS KNEE AND ROLLS OVER. WE THINK OF THAT AS TECHNOLOGY; TO A CHILD IT'S MAGIC"

—NEIL FRIEDMAN

thing physical.' So my wife Amanda, who was head of design, put the shaking mechanism into Tickle Me Elmo. And that shaking mechanism was the surprise, the wow that really put that product over the top. Then we made sure we put it into a Try Me package, and I got Tyco to agree to let us advertise. It was the first toy we advertised at Tyco Preschool, and we had a very limited budget. I then got our PR agency heavily involved. The PR behind it was really part of what made it happen.

I didn't know that. It appeared that there was a huge advertising budget.

It grew out of the PR as much as it did the advertising. The advertising certainly helped. And then Rosie O'Donnell put it on her TV show, and it went bigger—the day after Thanksgiving, the thing took off. The rest is history.

On the other side of the coin, did you ever create or champion a toy or a product line you really believed in that disappointed you? What did you learn from that experience?

I'll tell you the one that was probably the biggest disappointment. We bought a product called Bingo the Bear; it was an interactive

Your team sees probably hundreds of new properties and characters each year. What are the key elements they look for? Do they have a method for picking winners?

It's interesting. Stan Clutton, Fisher-Price SVP, and Mattel VP of licensing acquisitions Holly Stein are certainly very experienced at doing that. We tend to tie in with partners that have the same values and kinds of initiatives planned as we do. What we're looking for, in many respects, are properties that have long-term staying power, [belonging to] organizations that we feel are honorable and are good partners. We like them to be collaborative in the partnership so that we have the access and the ability to make great things. All of our business units understand character properties because it's what we do in building our own brands. And we know how to bring these products to life.

Neil, I've heard you talk about the wow factor over the years. Can you explain it?

It's the magic in a toy that makes it come to life and makes it fun for the child. If you look at Tickle Me Elmo, for example, as a piece of magic, it was the shake and the laugh that was surprising and made everybody smile.



There are a lot of property and product creators who are going to read this interview. On their behalf, let me ask you what advice would you give on how best to break into the toy or the licensing business?

In the licensing business, if they're starting off and they're a property holder, they should find a good agent who understands their type of property. Call LIMA, it will provide a list of agents who do those kinds of things. For the inventors, there are agents who represent new inventors. We have an incoming inventor relations department: Stan Clutton and Steve Toth oversee Fisher-Price, and Jamie Filipele looks after Mattel here in El Segundo. They will either say, 'Okay, we want to move forward,' or 'No, you should go to someone else,' and they can give the creator a list of agents.

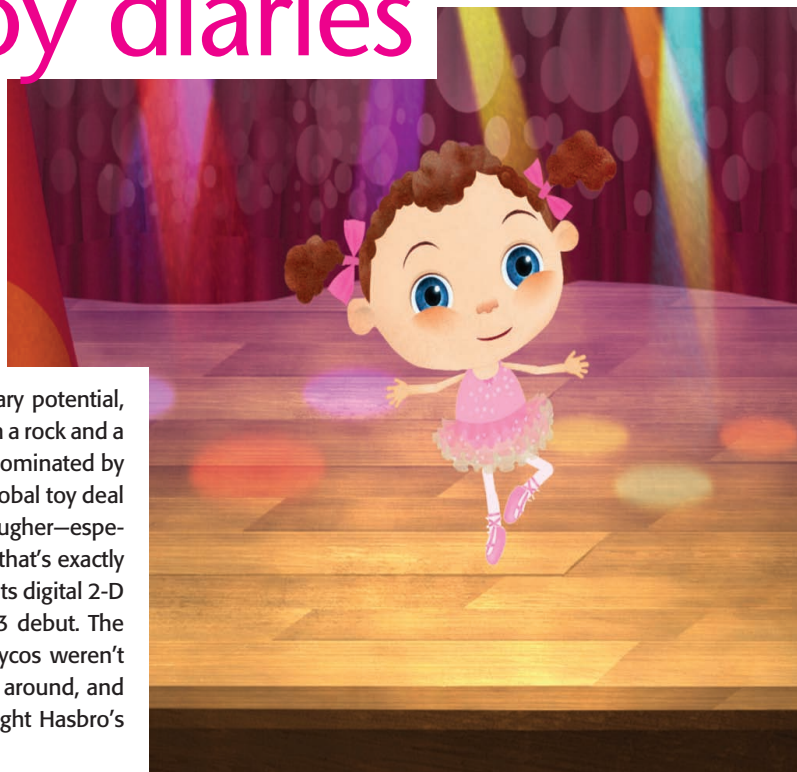
"One on One" continued on page 72

The master toy diaries

A behind-the-scenes look at how Decode is taking Franny's Feet from screen to shelf

by kate calder

When it comes to exploiting a property's ancillary potential, indie producers often find themselves between a rock and a hard place. Landing a spot on domestic nets dominated by in-house productions is tough, but getting a global toy deal without a U.S. broadcast berth may be even tougher—especially in a retail environment as risk-averse as it is right now. And that's exactly where Toronto, Canada's Decode Entertainment found itself with its digital 2-D animated preschool series *Franny's Feet* two years after its 2003 debut. The show had sold into 165 countries, but without a U.S. home, toycos weren't biting. What follows is an in-depth look at how Decode turned it around, and what went into finally inking a master toy license with heavyweight Hasbro's Playskool division last October.



2005—Finding U.S. placement

Franny's Feet centers around a precocious five-and-a-half-year-old girl whose feet take her on globe-trotting adventures when she secretly tries on shoes from her grandfather's repair shop. For example, she slips on sandals and is magically transported to a beach in Mexico, and a pair of trekking boots land her on a mountaintop in Tibet. Putting a fresh twist on the classic girls play pattern of dressing up makes the show naturally toyetic. But with 39 half hours produced and three years of pitching the IP at Licensing Show, Decode

and licensing agent The Sharpe Company, helmed by president Charlie Day, weren't making any headway. The show had to find a U.S. broadcaster.

As Decode put more eps into production, partner Beth Stevenson says the studio consciously self-policed storylines and content to make it align broadly with most U.S. broadcaster curriculums. The company even brought an educational consultant on-

board to help shape the show's preschool content with that goal in mind.

In the meantime, girls preschool properties were gaining traction with U.S. audiences. *Dora the Explorer* was soaring on Nick Jr., and Disney Playhouse had *JoJo's Circus*. The only major player without a girl-focused program for two- to five-year-olds was PBS, and it had begun to show some interest in *Franny*.

To make it happen, Stevenson says Decode realized it needed to hook up with one of

the stronger affiliate stations in the PBS collective, where both member channels and its headquarters have a say in programming decisions. The company began serious discussions with Thirteen/WNET out of New York, one of a few affiliates with a solid reputation for partnering with production companies to shape potential PBS hits.

There was some work to do, however, to make Decode's 11-minute show meet the station's half-hour time slot requirements. With input from WNET, Decode's team developed and produced six-minute interactive interstitials, called *Franny's Treasures*, for PBS KIDS GO! that fleshed out the show's running time.

The spots also satisfied PBS's curriculum by expanding on educational concepts explored in the main story. In the added minutes, Franny talks directly to viewers and asks for help figuring out game-like challenges. The interstitials also direct kids to a PBS website where they can click on some of Franny's adventures, sing along with her music videos and play interactive games.

Once Thirteen/WNET had taken the show under its wing, Decode was able to sign a national deal with PBS. At Licensing

Magic shoes transport Franny to every part of the globe and put a fresh twist on a classic play pattern. Once prodco Decode scored a berth on PBS for the series, toycos began to take notice.



Hi Bollywood is all about a group of teenagers wishing to take centerstage in Bollywood through careers in music, acting, directing, scripting and other related facets. Hi Bollywood is told in a manner that extends animation far beyond the world of kids to create an appeal that cuts across age groups in inimitable Bollywood style. Just don't second guess the syllabus in this school!

Hi BOLLWOOD

Direct to DVD TV series 11 x 13



Coproduction with Kilnidea Animation

Ashati

THE ASIAN PRINCESS

Feature film/ DVD 70 min

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Coproduction with ettaminA studios

WARRIORS OF CHAOS

Feature film/ DVD 70 min

Warriors of Chaos is about friendship, betrayal, power, magic, and war. It's about two men of honour who are closer than brothers. About two kingdoms that are as different as they can get. About evil men who sow their seeds of hatred. And wise ones who see through it all to ensure peace and justice prevail.

Warriors of Chaos has a pulsating storyline full of twists, turns and revelations. A narrative that reflects the glory of a period ruled by noble kings, ambitious fighters, cunning traitors, and a philosophy that's universal in its appeal.



Coproduction with Accel Animation

Kahani World Inc. (www.kahaniworld.com) is a creator, developer, and producer of world class animated content that has a distinctive Eastern touch.

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Kahani World aggregates world class talent and resources - directors, writers, character designers, musicians, voice actors, production and post-production studios, to build its pipeline of stories in contemporary formats. With an ever enlarging network of like-minded partnerships to energize its dreams, Kahani World's brands are poised to become icons in India, resonate in Asia and have a powerful global appeal. Kahani's brands take centerstage in 2007.

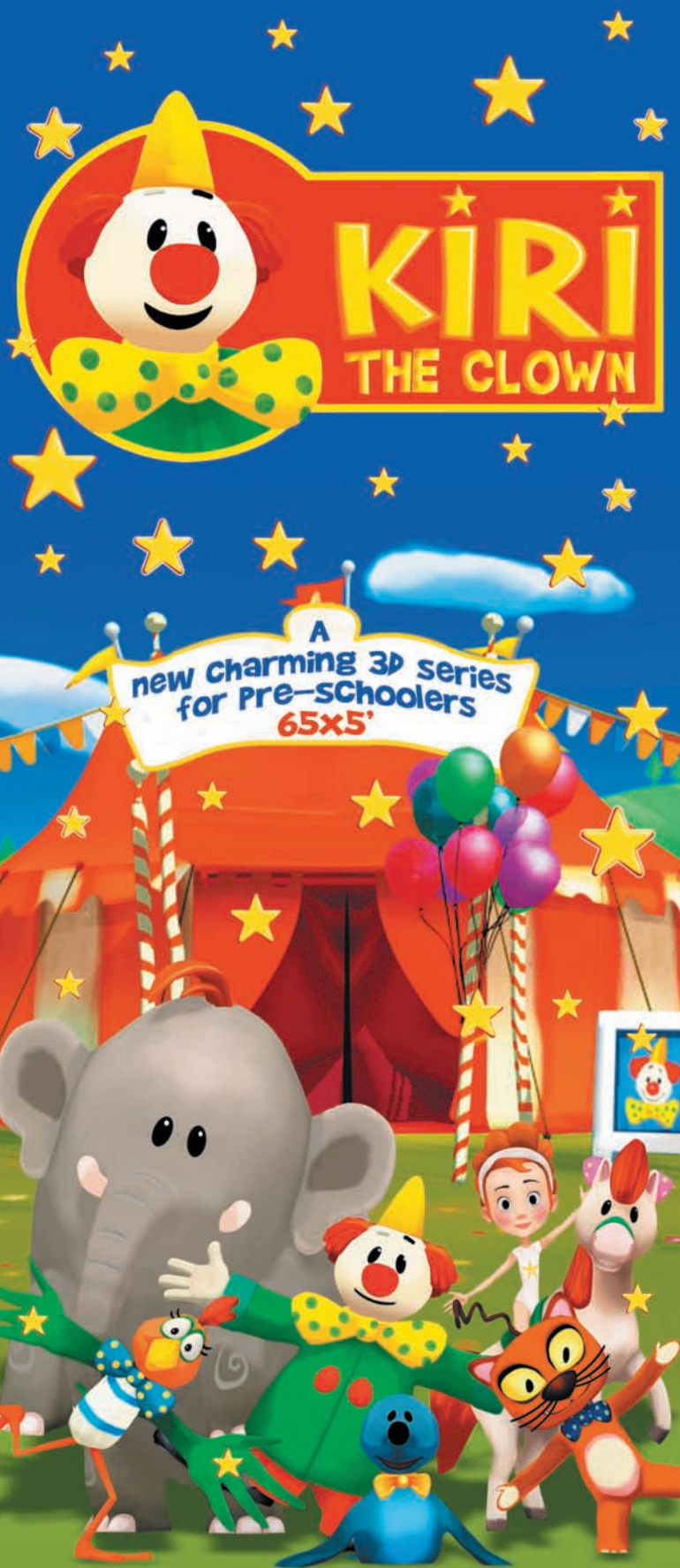


163, Lyndhurst Drive, Thornhill, Ontario L3T 6T7 CANADA

Contact: **Biren Ghose** CEO and Executive Producer

biren@kahaniworld.com or at + 91 99 800 24736

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World Sales

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ToyFair'07

Show in 2005, the prodco announced that *Franny's* would be going wide on PBS in July 2006, and it was at this point that the company began to field serious interest from some major toy players.

February to August 2006—Testing time

Decode and Day went to Toy Fair in 2006 with a detailed style guide that catalogued every visual element of the property, from Franny's various facial expressions to her shoes, treasures and backdrops. And, as is standard operating procedure, Day had worked up possible toy applications for the license. "We thought Franny would work primarily in terms of a preschool doll and playsets," says Day. The shoes and fashion elements that are part of the whole Franny world tap into some classic play patterns.

Playskool had shown interest and went back to Hasbro headquarters in Pawtucket, Rhode Island with episodes of *Franny's Feet* in hand. Some may be surprised to learn that toy companies do a significant amount of internal research before they come close to making a formal overture to a licensor, and Playskool's consumer research arm certainly got to work. It began by sending the videos home with several moms and tots to watch, and then compare against other popular shows. The results were favorable.

"Moms just loved Franny as a character. They loved that she took them on adventures, and they thought the idea of her putting on the shoes to do it was really sweet," says Leigh Anne Cappello, VP of marketing for Hasbro's preschool brands. The test groups gave *Franny* high ratings overall. "The more global a deal is, the bigger the volume opportunity, and we think *Franny's Feet* has the potential to be a significant property in the U.S.," she adds.

By August that year, Hasbro was ready to pitch its master toy proposal. Though other companies had tested Franny at the consumer level, Hasbro's detailed and lengthy consumer research to evaluate how far the property would resonate with preschool kids and their parents won over Decode and Day. "They are very selective in making property acquisitions that are a strong strategic fit, and are prepared to really get behind the properties that they select," Day says.

For her part, Stevenson admits the amount of thought Playskool had already put into the proposed product line for the pitch was impressive. Though the toys are still top-secret, she lights up when talking about the plans. "The products are very complementary. They keep Franny in more of a classic place," she says.

October 2006—It's a done deal

The Franny's team finalized the master toy deal with Playskool at the end of October. Shortly thereafter, the group began round-table discussions with Playskool about developing the toy line. However, Playskool/Hasbro keeps pretty tight-lipped about its testing formulas, and neither Decode nor Sharpe was in on creating the prototypes,

Before pitching its proposal, Playskool did some serious due diligence on the property, conducting consumer research with moms and kids to get their take on Franny's appeal






involved in their testing or privy to the final results. But Cappello suggests prototypes are put through the paces in focus groups that help zero in on viable concepts. Children get invited to Hasbro's in-house research facility, dubbed the FunLab, and play with the toys. The company measures the general appeal and ergonomics of the playthings. And besides structured qualitative groups, Playskool execs often observe free-form play through a glass wall in the Fun Lab to get a sense of what toys are striking a chord with kids.

February 2007—On the road to retail

Playskool is busy developing, testing and producing toys, which will pass by Decode for final creative approval. New product is scheduled to hit shelves in early 2008, but not before other ancillary deals, spurred by the master toy license, are out of the blocks. Since signing with Playskool, Decode is in the process of securing two publishing heavyweights to crank out books in different categories. Home video launches this month, and apparel will roll out further down the road.

Getting the products to market will be a combined effort. Day says the brand marketing strategy will ultimately be helmed by Decode and Sharpe. However, they'll work with Playskool and their publishing partners to determine the best route to market.

As the show itself gains popularity on PBS and yields reviews in mainstream media, Decode, Sharpe and Hasbro will work closely on getting as much exposure as possible for the brand to launch the first products.

In the meantime, Decode is back to the drawing board. Stevenson says her team is busy developing another 13 half-hour eps of *Frammy's Feet*, and this time around, there won't be any guesswork. The content will be tailored to fit PBS's time requirements and curriculum, and the various rights partners are in the loop. "It makes sense for those partners, publishers and toy companies to know early on about the storytelling process for further episodes so there are no surprises when the shows hit the TV screen," says Day. 

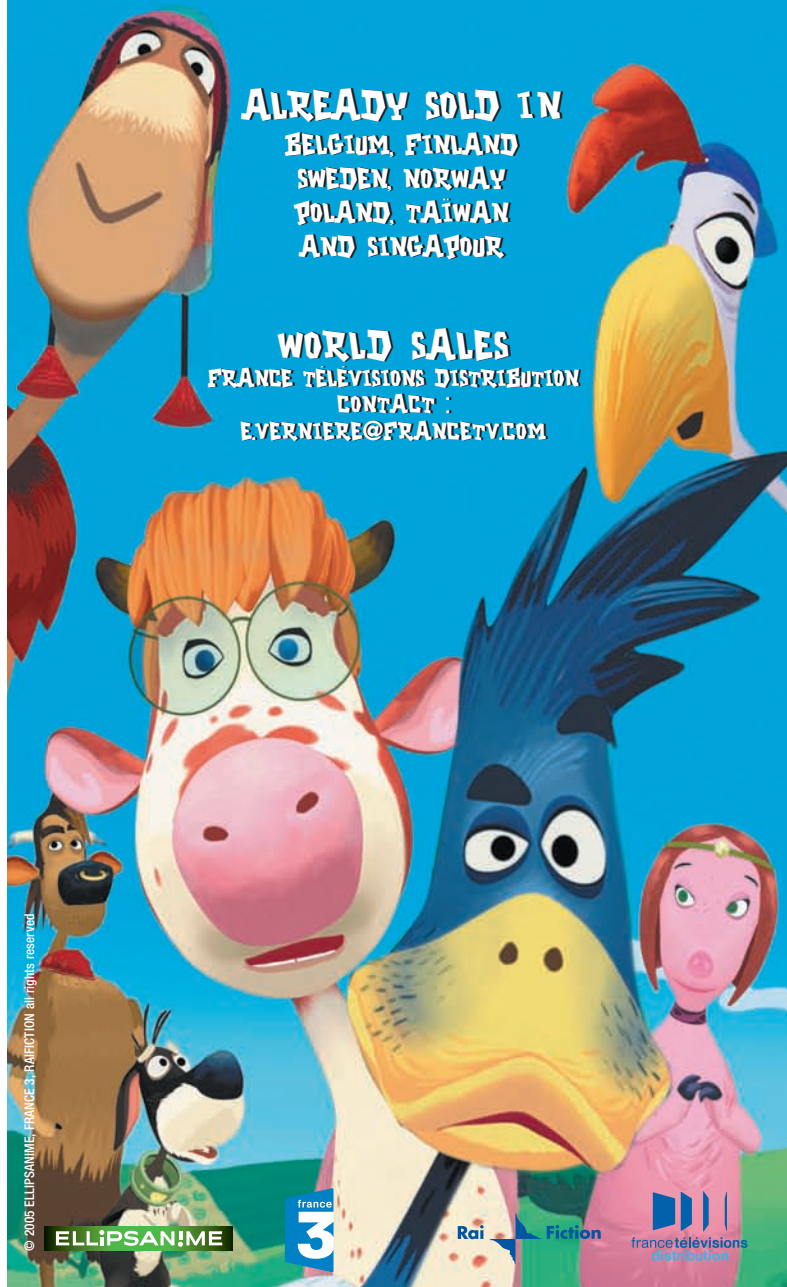
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"One on One" continued from page 67

So could a toy inventor just pick up the phone or send an email to Mattel? Is that welcome?

If the proposal is unsolicited, without a non-disclosure form signed, we can't look at it, and we'll send it back. So they need to contact the department first and ask us if we want to look at it; the department will then send a non-disclosure form. If the department can't look at it, it will send the inventor to somebody who might be able to help.

Even though there seemed to be an upswing in the toy industry this year, what about the business keeps you up at night right now?

Things that keep me up at night are consolidation at retail, the increasing costs of manufacturing, material costs, and trying to make sure that we can still maintain the quality, the wow factor, the features and the play value in a toy at prices that are still competitive or within reach of the average consumer. Unfortunately, the prices are going up at retail because of the cost of the raw materials. But the thing we always talk about is that we never cost-reduce the features of the toy. At the end of the day, it's all about the play value.

You were also a two-year chairman of LIMA. How do you feel about the future of the licensing business and the toy industry?

I think that licensing has played an enormous part in the toy industry since Walt Disney started licensing Mickey Mouse in 1932. And I think

the licensing business will always be a major part of the toy industry. As it's incumbent upon the toy industry to make great product and feature these licenses properly, it's incumbent upon the licensors to come up with good intellectual property and great entertainment for the appropriate age groups. Too often we find that the entertainment isn't necessarily geared to the right age group, or if it's a licensed property, that the key products aren't appropriate for either the age group or the gender. It's a combination of all those factors that's important, [but] I think the future is great.

Let's get back to things more personal, as we wind down this interview. Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

We live in Long Island, but we are planning to move to the L.A. area over the next couple of months. I have five children. Two are married, and one is in his last semester at the University of Connecticut. And then with my wife Amanda, we have two girls ages six and nine.

Thinking back to when you were a kid. Do you remember your favorite characters?

The characters that were the craze at the time were Mickey Mouse, with the first Mickey Mouse Club and the Wonderful World of Disney. Davey Crockett, of course, was a big hit. And everybody watched Howdy Doody.

Who would you like to spend an hour with?

If there was one historic figure I could meet, it

would probably be Thomas Edison—a creative, prolific person in our history. I'd like to learn from his ideas on innovation.

One last question, Neil. T.M.X. was the must-have toy this past holiday season. How is Mattel going to follow it up in 2007?

I think you know typically we don't talk about any of our new products in the press. But I will tell you we are doing a whole wedding segment for Barbie. Taking the aspiration of the wedding and bringing that to life—and not just putting a doll in a wedding gown. You'll see dolls that have electronics in them. Girls will be able to act out the entire wedding, and not just have a bride and a groom doll to dress and undress. So, it's really getting more play value into the Barbie line. I think what you'll see throughout our entire line is that there's more play value and more excitement and more of the wow in 2007.

It's been great talking to you. Congratulations on your exciting career so far, and we'll see you at Toy Fair.

Gary, as always, it's been a pleasure.

Gary Caplan is known in industry circles as "The Godfather of Licensing" and is president of Gary Caplan Inc., a Studio City, California-based consultancy specializing in the marketing and management of licensing programs. For further information, check out www.garycaplaninc.com.

Editor's note: Since Gary conducted this interview, Neil Friedman has been named LIMA's Hall of Fame inductee for 2007.

"Tackling Tweens 2.0" continued from page 64

onto Destiny or share with their friends. Essentially, the quizzes try and get to the root of their personalities, similar to those found in YA magazines like *Seventeen*.

Finally, there's Net Jet, Tiger Electronics' casual gaming console. The idea was to make bite-sized online gaming a better experience, while (as noted) letting the retailer in on the equation, says Steve Flege, the company's VP of marketing. So the Net Jet Controller (US\$29.99), launching this spring, acts like a plug-and-play device by connecting to a PC and taking the user directly to the Net Jet site. Kids then plug in a game key (US\$14.99) that enables them to access one feature game and three additional titles. It's a closed system that doesn't permit users to venture outside of the site, therefore internet safety shouldn't be an issue. Also, the site will not be supported by ads, so Flege expects some parents might be more comfortable with it than other commercial sites. Net Jet will roll out with 10 game keys, including licensed titles like *SpongeBob SquarePants: Pizza Toss* and *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends: Buggin' Out*.

Racing to market? Beware the retail traffic jam

With so many offerings hitting the market at the same time, there is a danger that consumers will be overwhelmed by too many options. "It's not all going to work," admits NPD's Frazier. "If there are too many on the market at once, it will quickly get confusing," she says, adding that this same situation played out in the electronic learning aid category about two years ago.

That said, Frazier believes the category shouldn't feel too much heat from interactive competitors in the console game aisle. The web is a different space, and these new toys revolve around a different game model. Al Kahn, CEO of 4Kids Entertainment, agrees.

"Many different online activities co-exist right now with console games," he says. Of course, the one thing that might stop the market from becoming flooded is the cost of the websites being supported by the sales of physical toys. "Depending on how deep these sites are," says Kahn, "they can take millions of dollars to develop." The more members and gameplay it can handle, the more it will cost. "That's what will end up filtering out what's good and what's not." ❧

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LOOK OUT!

Marvel and Sony plan to pack a market wallop with Spider-Man 3

by lana castleman

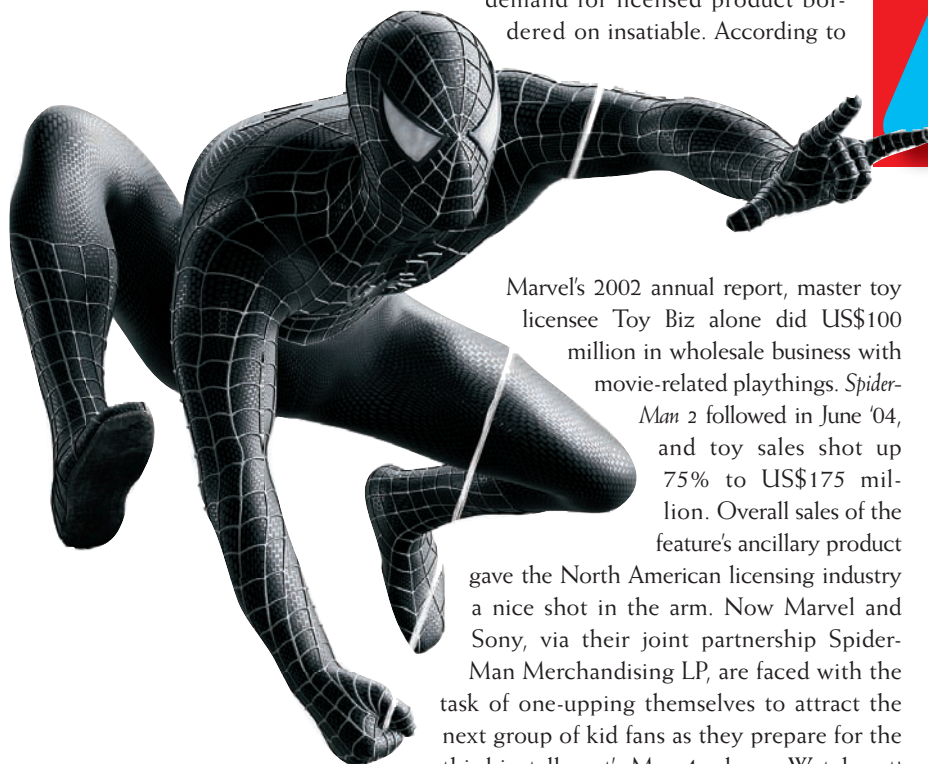
From the moment Spider-Man appeared in Marvel's Amazing Fantasy #15 comic in August 1962, readers recognized something different and immediately likeable in the web-slinging superhero. He was a teenager who had to learn how to cope with his newfound powers, and was often subject to the foibles that all of us face as we grow up. Young boys had no trouble envisioning themselves in his shoes, and generations of them have set out on the path to adulthood idolizing both Spidey and his alter-ego Peter Parker.

SPIDER-MAN 3

Within five years of the first comic's publication, Spider-Man had made the leap from page to screen, appearing in seven TV series before catapulting into the ranks of movie stardom in 2002. Sony Pictures released *Spider-Man*, starring Tobey Maguire as the webbed one, in May that year, and it took the character and the franchise to new heights. Worldwide box office topped out at close to US\$822 million, while consumer demand for licensed product bordered on insatiable. According to

According to one of the film's producers, Grant Curtis, Spider-Man's biggest battle may be with himself. The audience can expect a richer exploration of his internal life through the appearance of Black-suited Spider-Man. For the first time, New York has fully embraced its hero, and Peter begins to believe his own hype, developing a bit of an

"Kids don't scare so easily...Black-suited Spider-Man is cool and more self-confident, and will help reach older teens as well."



Marvel's 2002 annual report, master toy licensee Toy Biz alone did US\$100 million in wholesale business with movie-related playthings. *Spider-Man 2* followed in June '04, and toy sales shot up 75% to US\$175 million. Overall sales of the feature's ancillary product

gave the North American licensing industry a nice shot in the arm. Now Marvel and Sony, via their joint partnership Spider-Man Merchandising LP, are faced with the task of one-upping themselves to attract the next group of kid fans as they prepare for the third installment's May 4 release. Watch out! Here comes *Spider-Man 3*.

NEW FOES AND INTERNAL DEMONS

On the creative side, *Spider-Man 3* may be the most ambitious outing yet. Original director Sam Raimi, the core cast and production team are all on-board, and the story will pick up immediately where the final shot of *Spider-Man 2* left off. Spidey has accepted his role as protector of New York City and is seen swinging off to his next adventure. This time around, though, he'll face off against not one, but three villains, and will have to conquer his darker side before the movie ends.

ego. At the same time, a black Spidey suit enters the picture. In comic lore, the suit has an alien origin, but in both media, its chief aim is to form a symbiotic relationship with its host, feeding on the less appealing aspects of that personality.

Once on, the black suit enhances both Peter's skills and emotions; he swings higher and moves more quickly as his hubris runs amok. "We get to delve into aspects of Peter's personality we haven't touched on since *Spider-Man*," says Curtis. "When Peter discovered his powers, his first instinct was to exploit them for personal gain at the wrestling match." So the suit feeds these petty instincts, and Peter struggles to leave it behind and become a better human being. Curtis contends that Peter's internal dilemma will only make kid and adult viewers identify with him that much more. "He's just as prone to our insecurities and failings," he says. Showing Peter work through his problems might even help kids figure out how to overcome obstacles in their own lives.

Then there are the villains—namely Venom (Topher Grace), The New Goblin (James Franco) and Sandman (Thomas Haden Church). A trio of evil-doers may seem excessive, given that Spidey faces only one foe in each of the first two films, but Curtis says each one plays a pivotal role in helping Peter learn to be a better person and superhero. Venom and The New Goblin, in particular, have very personal connections to Spider-Man.

SCREENING SPIDEY

1967-70

Spider-Man, the first animated series, runs on ABC

1974

Spidey Super Stories shorts starring a live-action Spider-Man make their first appearance on PBS's *The Electric Company*

1978

A live-action tokusatsu *Spider-Man* series bows in Japan

1977

The one-season live-action series *Amazing Spider-Man* debuts on CBS

SPIDER-MAN 3

After Peter casts it aside, the black suit ends up bonding with his workplace rival, Eddy Brock. Eddy has a darker personality to begin with, and the suit consumes him. He turns into Venom and gains Spidey-like powers that actually exceed those of our hero. Venom is stronger, can swing farther and run faster. "The resulting battle dynamic is really fun to watch," says Curtis.

The New Goblin, meanwhile, is really Peter's only friend, Harry Osborn, who vows at the end of the last film to pick up his father's mantle and avenge his death. Talk about an awkward and very personal situation for Peter. "Besides MJ, Peter has had only one friend in the films, and that's Harry. Similarly, the only friend Harry has ever had is Peter," notes Curtis. "Their battles are some of the most intimate ones we have ever filmed."

As for Sandman, this is where the tech wizards really worked overtime. The character is a shape-shifter made of sand (of course), and can go anywhere a grain of sand can, flowing through cracks and tiny holes. Peter's punches and web balls travel right through Sandman's form and seemingly have no effect on him. The problem the production

go broad and aim for a presence in all tiers of retail, with the majority being sold through U.S. mass outlets including Wal-Mart, Target and Toys 'R' Us.

Paul Gitter, SVP of consumer products for North America at Marvel Entertainment—which heads up the licensing efforts for the LP—says licensee and product lists have been streamlined this time around. Contracts for Spider-Man 3 merch were designed in line with Marvel's overall strategy of granting portfolio rights for a given category to one or two manufacturers. For example, Activision has all interactive games, and HarperCollins is heading up publishing. Gitter says the strategy helps the LP maintain tighter control over the product assortment and merchandising, as well as offering retail buyers a one-stop shopping environment.

So expect to see the best categories from Spider-Man 1 and 2 return, including toys, interactive, apparel and back-to-school, while under-performers such as impulse POP items will not make the cut. Gitter is also

"We get to delve into aspects of Peter's personality we haven't touched on since *Spider-Man*."

team faced was that the technology required to realize the character on film didn't initially exist. Curtis says animation programs at the time could render and manipulate thousands of particles of sand, but the look Raimi wanted required the ability to work with billions. The studio's visual effects house Sony Pictures Imageworks had to create new software to do the job.

SPINNING AN L&M WEB

With the creative in place, Spider-Man Merchandising LP has set about weaving a licensing, retail and promotions program to match the scale of the production, attempting to break records set by the second film. As predicated by the last two movie programs, merchandise for *Spider-Man 3* will

be mulling over some direct-to-retail deals this time, but is only looking at non-competitive categories where there are no licensees currently signed on.

The merch itself is being derived from a style guide that mirrors the look and feel of the film, and Gitter says licensees have been asked to "stick with a movie interpretation." What's perhaps more interesting is that the guide and some products, such as Activision's upcoming video game, were developed in close collaboration with the creative team. Raimi and his staff met with product partners and showed clips of the film in its earliest stages. "We meet with partners early and often," Curtis says. "You see the movie trailer and toys long before the movie comes out," he adds, and if this is the way



1994

Spider-Man: The Animated Series launches on Fox, stopping production in 1998 after 65 eps

2002

Spider-Man hits theaters, scoring US\$114.8 million in its opening weekend

2004

Spider-Man 2 opens on June 30 and spends 22 weeks in U.S. cinemas

1981

Two animated series, *Spider-Man* and *Spider-Man & His Amazing Friends*, air in the U.S.

1999

Spider-Man Unlimited picks up the Fox series' torch for a season

2003

MTV launches *Spider-Man: The New Animated Series* in full CGI

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SPIDER-MAN 3



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the project is introduced to consumers, the creatives want to be sure it makes the best impression.

Raimi et al. willingly shared production research. A lot of time can be spent in pre-production, creating 3-D maquettes of the characters and figuring out which poses look the most dynamic on film, and consequently, on product. Eric Nyman, VP of the Marvel division at Hasbro, says his team got unparalleled access to storyboards, scripts and maquettes while creating the toy line. (The new master toy licensee agreed to pay a US\$205-million guarantee for a five-year Marvel license in early '06, and is reportedly handing over a US\$70-million chunk of it upon *Spider-Man 3*'s theatrical release.)

For its part, Hasbro started whetting kids' appetite for the toys with its Spider-Man Origins line, released this past November. The collection of action figures includes the villains from both films and an accompanying re-release of *Spider-Man* introduces the black-suit backstory via a new featurette. A wide distribution web is set for the March 24 launch of *Spider-Man 3* product in North America and many countries overseas.

Along with a varied range of action figures, the boy-focused line will be led by the king of all web blasters. Building on previous incarnations, the new Spinning Web Blaster (US\$19.99 to US\$24.99) ups the role-play ante. This time the can of Silly String rotates at high speed and the blaster shoots circular webs onto any given surface it's aimed at.

COMING SOON: SPIDER-MAN INVADES RETAIL

From a retail and promotions standpoint, *Spider-Man 3* will be everywhere after Easter this year, and product is slated to find its way into all tiers. While SVP of Sony Pictures Consumer Products Juli Boylan says *Spider-Man* was a tough sell, its performance and that of *Spider-Man 2* (which increased sell-in and sell-through


SPIDEY BY THE NUMBERS

- Spider-Man 3 movie products will land in more than **70** countries
- **350,000,000** Spider-Man comics have sold to date
- Spider-Man comics are published in **38 languages**
- There are more than **400 movie licensees worldwide**
- Sharper Image sold a **US\$200** Spider-Man replica that stood **six feet tall** for Spider-Man 2
- **US\$821,708,551**: The worldwide box-office gross for *Spider-Man*
- *Spider-Man 2* raked in **US\$783,766,341**
- *Spider-Man* opened on **3,876 screens** across the U.S.
- **4,166 screens** played host to *Spider-Man 2* on June 30, 2004
- Toy Biz had wholesale sales of **US\$175,000,000** for Spider-Man 2 toys

levels) exceeded expectations and opened up a lot of doors. The problem now is choosing where the LP will get the biggest bang for its in-store promo buck. "While most retailers can say Spider-Man 3 will be one of the largest licensed properties, licensing may not be a focus for all of them on a store-wide level," she says. "We would rather build solid, big campaigns in fewer places than be spread thin everywhere."

The majority of retail activity will focus on mass and mid-tier outlets, and exclusive programs are in the works for Wal-Mart, Target and TRU. Each retailer will have a distinct Spidey look. "What works at Wal-Mart does not work at Target," says Boylan. "Even the way they approach in-store promotions is different." The whole Red- vs. Black-suited Spider-Man, however, will be a theme. It lends itself to visually striking displays and allows the promo team to have a bit of fun exploring the darker side of Peter Parker.

"I don't think kids scare so easily," says Mary Goss Robino, SVP of global marketing partnerships at Sony. "The fact that he's black makes him cool, and this stronger, more self-confident persona will help reach older teens as well."

Boylan and Robino's teams will come together for planned in-store feature areas that will see food, toys and clothes merchandised in one spot. On the promo side, Burger King is on-board as a global QSR partner, and General Mills is incorporating Spider-Man 3 into 12 packaged goods categories. Like Burger King's Spider-Man 2 promo, which included both an adult-targeted sweepstakes and activity-oriented kids meal premiums such as the Spidey Web Ball, the upcoming effort will target both demos. Additionally, Pringles, Kraft, 711 Stores, Sony Electronics and Comcast have some sticky promos in the works leading up to the film's day-and-date international release. 

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EDITORIAL CONTACTS:

Lana Castleman, Online Editor,
lcastleman@brunico.com

Gary Rusak, Online Writer,
grusak@brunico.com

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Global Pitch Guide



CECILIA PERSSON

Cartoon Network UK

CECILIA PERSSON

**VP of programming,
acquisitions and presentation**

Looking for: Preschool programming for the Cartoonito block on Cartoon Network Too (CN's second channel) will be a top priority at upcoming markets. For the main channel, Persson is, as always, on the lookout for visually striking and cleverly scripted comedies for six- to 11-year-olds.

Preferred approach: It's best to make initial contact via e-mail to either Persson (cecilia.persson@turner.com) or acquisitions executive Richard Rowe (richard.rowe@turner.com).

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, LA Screenings, Natpe

Cartoon Network (U.S.)

DANIEL WINEMAN

**Manager of acquisitions
and co-productions**

Looking for: Comedies, action-adventures, calendar specials, feature-length animation and live-action programs with a cartoon sensibility. Series meant to tickle the funny bone should have gender-neutral characters and include visual gags, good pacing, high-quality animation and jokes with an edge. Wineman's action-adventure needs are for girls and boys ages six to 11, or a nine- to 14-year-old boys audience. It takes a minimum of 26 episodes to launch a strip, and CN will need all rights for acquisitions to ensure the broadest platform reach. Bonus points will go to pitches that include options for transitioning the series to new digital screens. Hint: CN is using newer services as promotional and strategic platforms to move viewers to its linear and non-linear networks.

Preferred approach: Never cold call or e-mail. Send a pitch via mail with demo disks, synopsis, character bios and sample storylines.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, Toy Fair, Tokyo Anime Fair, MIPTV, MIPCOM, Natpe



DANIEL WINEMAN



ANNE GILCHRIST

CBBC (U.K.)

ANNE GILCHRIST

Creative director

Looking for: Ambitious and daring programs that reflect the ethos of the BBC. Gilchrist says she often receives pitches for great shows that would work well on any network, but competition in the U.K. kids TV market has forced her to only consider programs that are off-the-wall, surprising and daring. Educational topics are important, but a program should be entertaining first. She says the reality series *Evacuation*, about kids traveling back in time to Britain during World War II, is a good example as it inadvertently teaches viewers about history. Factual formats are a top draw, and animation isn't ordered that often because of its expense, but she'll take a look at ambitious toons.

Preferred approach: Send an introductory e-mail to Gilchrist's assistant, Becki Shorrock (becki.shorrock@bbc.co.uk), with a short project description and reasons why CBBC's audience will want to watch the series. If interest has been piqued, expect a follow-up call or e-mail asking for production details.

Market circuit: MIPTV, MIPCOM



MICHAEL CARRINGTON

CBeebies (U.K.)

MICHAEL CARRINGTON

Creative director

Looking for: Four very specific programs for preschoolers ages zero to six. First off, Carrington needs a 26 x 9.5-minute animated series for boys ages four to six. It should straddle the line between reality and fantasy, embracing adventure, energy and fun. Also on his list is a 26 x 9.5-minute gender-neutral toon for four- to six-year-olds with a strong enough visual style that a still image from the program could illustrate it. As for live action, there's an opening for a comedy series that will bridge the gap for boys four to six and girls caught between CBeebies and CBBC. And preschool producers should rejoice because the broadcaster is keen to find an iconic series for the two to five set that represents a giant creative leap forward for the genre. Although the net's first priority is to commission from U.K. producers, Carrington will take pitches from international companies if the program is truly original.

Preferred approach: Mail an overall program synopsis, main character description, one or two sample story outlines and episode structures to Carrington at BBC East Tower, Room E1015, London, England, W12 7RJ. Alternatively, e-mails are accepted at cbeebies submissions@bbc.co.uk.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM

Discovery Kids (U.S.)

DEA PEREZ

VP of programming and operations

Looking for: Real-world programming for the core kid demo that gives a glimpse into the lives of children from around the globe. Reality-based or narrative-driven storylines should include children interacting with animals and nature, or feature kids experiencing exciting global adventures. Perez prefers series to specials, and she'll consider animation so long as it has real-world content woven into its stories. Pitches geared to preschool kids should follow Discovery Kids' Ready, Set, Learn credo of persistence, resilience and optimism. Live action, puppets or animation will work, but must take on a "try and try again" attitude to problem-solving.

Preferred approach: Potential co-productions and straight-up acquisitions need to be submitted through the producers.discovery.com website.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM, Natpe



DEA PEREZ



SANDRA WALMARK

Family Channel (Canada)

SANDRA WALMARK

Manager of original production

Looking for: Programs geared to kids ages eight to 14. Walmark is excited to review any series for this age group that takes a multi-platform approach, so it's best to consider how tweens will access the content in new media such as the internet and handheld screens before pitching. Family wants to be involved early in a show's development, but Walmark says she'll also accept pitches on more fully developed properties.

Preferred approach: The best plan is to e-mail Walmark first (sandyw@family.com) to ensure the pitch fits the broadcaster's needs. Bibles and other materials can either be presented in person or mailed to 181 Bay Street, Box 787, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5J 2T3.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, Banff, MIPCOM



Global Pitch Guide



FIVE (U.K.)

NICK WILSON

Controller of children's programming

Looking for: Programs with secondary revenue potentials are very interesting to Wilson, but good storytelling shouldn't be jeopardized for the sake of a toy line. When pitching, keep in mind Five's Milshake preschool block reaches kids up to seven years old. Since the launch of the second block on Digital Channel Five, he's picking up all U.K. broadcasting rights for crossover potential. Wilson prefers co-production and commissioning, but he'll take a gander at completed programs that are open to some regional reversioning. As for what not to pitch, keep drama proposals for four- to eight-year-olds on the shelf until late 2008. He still commissions factual, but almost exclusively from U.K. production companies.

Preferred approach: Send Wilson an e-mail (nick.wilson@five.tv) with your ideas to gauge his interest.

Market circuit: MIPCOM

Jetix Europe

PAUL TAYLOR, CEO

Looking for: Fantasy-driven adventure with a healthy dose of character-centric, cheeky humor. While half-hour formats are fine, the broadcaster welcomes seven- and 11-minute series and shorts up to three minutes in length. Jetix is looking for toons and live-actioners, and the team wants to help develop content with new storytelling methods, animation styles and talent. Please pitch with multi-platform initiatives in mind, but be sure the project is driven by its story and not interactive or consumer products plans.

Preferred approach: Nathan Waddington (nathan.waddington@jetix.net), director of pan-European acquisitions, will take a look at ideas via e-mail. Include initial designs, a synopsis and a bio of the key creative talent.

Market circuit: MIPTV, Annecy, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM



Kids' WB!

BETSY MCGOWEN

SVP and GM

Looking for: Boy-targeted action-adventure, especially programs infused with character-driven comic elements. But McGowen is also on the lookout for pure comedies that will appeal to boys ages six to 11. Animated or live-action programs that are E/I-compliant should be targeted to boys five to seven or six to 11.

Preferred approach: Creators should always begin by calling McGowen directly at 818-977-5000, and then she'll let you know if she's interested in seeing anything further.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, Tokyo Anime Fair, Licensing Show, MIPCOM, Comic Con, Natpe

Ki.Ka (Germany)

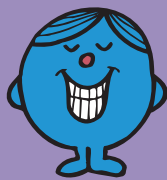
SEBASTIAN DEBERTIN

Head of fiction, acquisitions and co-productions

Looking for: Animated features are high on the agenda for 2007, as well as animated



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MR. PERFECT



MR. MESSY



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LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE



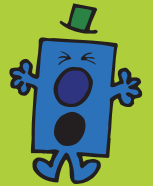
LITTLE MISS TROUBLE



MR. BOUNCE

MR. MEN and LITTLE MISS

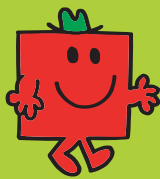
By Roger Hargreaves



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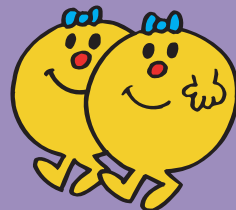
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Global Pitch Guide



SEBASTIAN DEBERTIN

series for the six to nine demo. Keep the storylines gender-neutral, and focus on creating positive and strong characters. Debertin is on the lookout for innovative content that will excite his viewers. Be sure to outline a program's merchandising potential in the pitch.

Preferred approach: To make initial contact, send an e-mail to Debertin's assistant (constanze.spilling@kika.de), or place a phone call to 49-361-218-1869 to discuss the project. It's also a good idea to send a fax to 49-361-218-1850 with some supporting materials. Alternatively, send a package with bible, pilot scripts and DVDs to Gothaer Str. 36, 99094 Erfurt, Germany. If Debertin is interested, he'll request more material.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Cartoon Movie, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM

NDR (Germany)

THOMAS SCHREIBER

Controller of factual
and children's programming

Looking for: Live-action tween programming that relates to everyday life in Germany, with episodes that are at least a half hour long. Short programming for preschoolers is also a top priority, and animated or live-action interstitials running between two and a half minutes and three minutes are ideal.

Preferred approach: Don't make unsolicited calls or introduce yourself via e-mail. Schreiber prefers a DVD screener and a one- to three-page summary sent via snail mail to Hugh-Greene-Weg 1, 22529 Hamburg, Germany.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Annecy, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM



THOMAS SCHREIBER

Nickelodeon Australia

KATRINA SOUTHON

General manager

Looking for: Programming for the 2008 season that promotes interactivity and exploration for the Nick Jr. preschool audience. Series can be comprised of half hours or interstitials, with content that translates to the broadcaster's website. Developing projects with online and interactive applications are also of interest. Make sure pitches include some scheduling strategies based on a child's ability to play and learn through repetition. For kids eight to 12, Southon is on the hunt for live-action dramas and comedies with at least 26 half hours.

Preferred approach: Mail a show bible and outlines, scripts and screeners, if available, to GPO Box 4371, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM



LAYLA LEWIS

Nickelodeon UK

LAYLA LEWIS

Senior programming manager

Looking for: Co-production ideas across all genres, but Nick UK will want to test them with a pilot before committing to a full series. For acquisitions, the top priority is live-action comedies for seven- to 12-year-olds and animation for kids four to nine. Preschool pitches should keep Nickelodeon's participatory and interactive

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Global Pitch Guide

themes for this young demo in mind. To get in Lewis's good books, don't begin a pitch by discussing program's merch potential.

Preferred approach: Mail (15-18 Rathbone Place, London, England, W1T 1HU)

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, LA Screenings, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM



MARIANA CANO FUENTES

Once TV (Mexico)

MARIANA CANO FUENTES

Head of children's programming and acquisitions

Looking for: Live-action preschool programming and girl-skewing series. Fuentes is eager to look at non-fiction series for three- to five-year-olds, especially if the project is about the lives of animals. For older kids, she needs fiction for girls. Pitch tip: Doing a little research on Latin American kids will help your proposal cut through.

Preferred approach: Send a bible via e-mail (mcano@mail.oncetv.ipn.mx).

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPCOM

PBS (U.S.)

LINDA SIMENSKY

Senior director of children's programming

Looking for: Programming originating from any medium geared to preschoolers ages two to five or kids six to nine. Simensky has no preference for animation over live action and mixed media, but she insists on a strong educational curriculum. Keep in mind the pubcaster's library has no room right now for literacy or social/emotional series. Be ready to explain how the series' website would look, and give ideas as to how the program's content might translate to other platforms.

Preferred approach: Send an e-mail with an overall series idea, an educational curriculum outline, character descriptions, four to five episode ideas and designs to Brad Pettingell at PBS Children's Programming (bwpettingell@pbs.org) or via snail mail to 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia, 22202

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, Ottawa Animation Festival



LINDA SIMENSKY

PBS Sprout (U.S.)

ANDREW BEECHAM

SVP of programming

Looking for: Creative plans that include cross-media initiatives. He's not looking to fill any scheduling holes right now, but that shouldn't deter producers from contacting Beecham. He wants to brainstorm and fill his rolodex with creative contacts who have clever ideas for VOD and broadband.

Preferred approach: Contact Beecham's assistant, Maria Weglarz (maria_weglarz@sproutletsgrow), or via mail at 2000 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19103. He'll be in touch if he's interested.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPCOM, Natpe



ANDREW BEECHAM



ANDREA LANG

RTL 2 (Germany)

ANDREA LANG

Head of kids and animation

Looking for: High-quality adventure series and CGI projects. The Pokito block is being fuelled by anime series, and Lang's keen to look at programs inspired by that genre to serve action-hungry boys and comedy-loving girls ages six to nine. She's stepping into projects at an earlier stage these days, so producers need not pitch completed series.

Preferred approach: Send an e-mail to andrea.lang@rtl2.de.

Market circuit: MIPTV, Natpe

Super RTL (Germany)

FRANK DIETZ

Head of acquisitions
and co-productions

Looking for: High-quality animated family series and comedies with at least 26 x half hours. Pitches should detail how the show will

succeed on both new screens and retail shelves. But don't try to win him over with the hard sell—avoid over-hyping a program's potential, and don't call a series "the next" anything.

Preferred approach: Send bibles, storylines and screeners to RTL Disney Fernsehen, Richard-Byrd-Strasse 6, 50829 Koln, Germany.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Annecy, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM



FRANK DIETZ

Teletoon (Canada)

CAROLINE TYRE

Acquisitions manager

Looking for: Programs that answer three questions: Does it make you laugh? Does it make you think? And does it entertain? The cablenet is on the lookout for bold and spontaneous programming geared to pre-teens, particularly holiday specials

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Tokyo International Anime Fair Executive Committee



<http://www.tokyoanime.jp/>

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Global Pitch Guide



CAROLINE TYRE

and movies. Tyre will always take a look at pitches for series and specials aimed at a younger demo, but don't bother sending preschool-targeted or educational bibles. Teletoon is keen to expand its multimedia offerings, but it's not imperative to outline new media initiatives in the initial pitch. For developing projects, send a package that includes a clear description, the development stage it's in, a pilot (if available), information on the production company and creative team, a preliminary development or production budget, a proposed financial plan and contact info. For completed projects, Tyre will contact you if she'd like to see a screener. It's best to e-mail her first with a brief description, and don't send unsolicited packages.

Preferred approach: Mail packages for programs in development to Domi-

nique Dussault, project coordinator of original production (2100 Ste. Catherine Street West, Suite 200, Montréal, Quebec, Canada, H3H 2T3), and for acquisition queries, e-mail Tyre (carolinet@teletoon.com).

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM, Natpe

TV Ontario (Canada)

PAT ELLINGSON

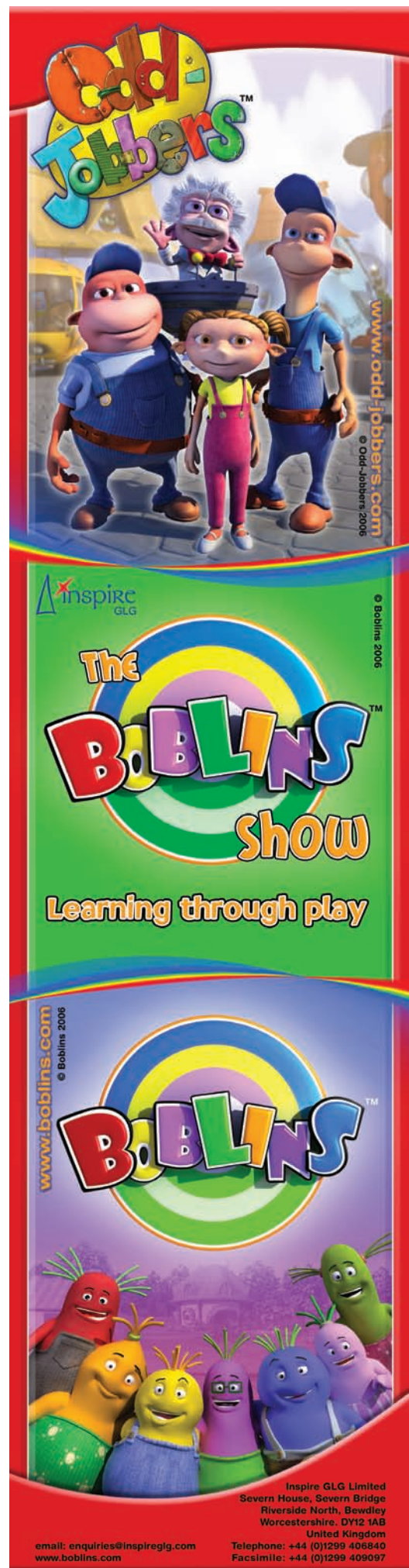
Creative head of
children's, youth
and lifeskills programming

Looking for: Live-action educational programs with arts and crafts, music or science themes. But she'll also take a look at animated series without a curriculum focus for demos from preschool up to age nine. Pitches for younger viewers should have companion web activities, and for tween viewers, Ellingson wants programs that encourage co-viewing with parents. These pitches should be educational, and she's looking to top up on science, drama and reality topics. In terms of format, Ellingson will look at anything for this older demographic.

Preferred approach: Get on Ellingson's good side by sending a hard copy intro rather than an e-mail. First-time



PAT ELLINGSON





Global Pitch Guide



BEATHE A. DAAE

TVO pitchers should deliver a bio of their company, past projects and a list of partners. Send in as many details as possible, and if a full bible isn't yet available, be sure to present enough information to give Ellingson a clear idea of the project and how it will be executed. She promises to read the pitches ASAP and will respond either by phone or letter.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPCOM

TV2 Junior (Norway)

BEATHE A. DAAE

Head of children's programs

Looking for: Holiday specials with Easter or Christmas themes. All other pitches should have a high number of episodes already in the can so Daae can establish the series in her territory. Cheerful, high-quality programs with strong characters top Daae's list, and she's keen to look at shows for any age up to 12.

Preferred approach: Mail a pilot to

Postboks 7222, 5020 Bergen, Norway, or if one isn't available, send over a story-line, script and some images. She'll accept e-mail packages (beathe.daae@tv2.no), or feel free to stop by for a visit the next time you're in Norway.

Market circuit: MIPTV, MIPCOM, Le Rendez-Vous



JOHANE LANDRY

VRAK.TV (French Canada)

JOHANE LANDRY

Director of acquisitions

Looking for: Live-action dramas or comedies for kids ages nine through 12 with at least 26 episodes planned. All shows will need to be translated into Québécois French, and pitches should have a contemporary and unconventional feel.

Preferred approach: Send an e-mail with concise details about the program's synopsis, its audience target and available rights (jlandry@chaines.astral.com). Send viewing material to 2100 Ste. Catherine Street West, Suite 700, Montréal, Quebec, Canada, H3H 2T3.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM



BRIGID SULLIVAN

WGBH (U.S.)

BRIGID SULLIVAN

VP of children's education and interactive programming

Looking for: Entertaining, curriculum-oriented series for preschool, six- to eight-year-olds and the nine to 12 set. Sullivan wants programs with partial or full funding, an

easily understood concept or well-known brand, and a cross-platform strategy. She needs proof the show can be delivered on budget, and would like to see details about the creative team. It's a great idea to add research data that demonstrates a need for the series.

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Global Pitch Guide

Preferred approach: E-mail Eric Taub (eric_taub@wgbh.org) or mail him the pitch at 125 Western Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, 02030

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Banff, MIPCOM

YLE (Finland)

VIRVE "VICKY" SCHRODERUS

Acquisition executive

Looking for: Program pitches that include plans for new media distribution. Animated series (shorts, 10-minute, 13-minute or half-hour eps) and specials (from five minutes to a half hour) for preschoolers and core kids up to 10 have the best shot.

Preferred approach: Send Schroderus an e-mail (virve.schroderus@yle.fi) or mail the details to Tohlopinranta 31, PO Box 196, 33101 Tampere, Finland. Pitches should have synopses for at least three episodes and main character designs.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Annecy, Cartoon Forum, MIPCOM



VIRVE "VICKY" SCHRODERUS



PHIL PIAZZA

YTV (Canada)

PHIL PIAZZA

VP of programming and business development for children's TV

Looking for: Series that promote family co-viewing and are suitable for prime-time broadcast. Strippable comedies work best (*Malcolm in the Middle* currently sits in the cablenet's 8 p.m. slot), and producers should make sure their series will amuse kids ages six to 11 and adults 18 to 49. Piazza and his team will also review pitches for YTV's core youth audience, but programs must have appealing characters and strong storylines. Commissions need to qualify as 100% Canadian content and require a Canadian producer to move forward.

Preferred approach: For acquisitions, send screeners and short descriptions to John Rooney, director of programming (john.rooney@corusent.com). Commission packages with bibles and scripts should be e-mailed to Coral Schoug, original producers coordinator (coral.schoug@corusent.com), and then producers should follow up with Bonita Siegel (bonita.siegel@corusent.com).

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Banff, MIPCOM

ZDF (Germany)

NICOLE KEEB

Commissioning editor

Looking for: Animated and live-action programming. Preschool series must have at least 13 eps, and Keeb is not interested in seeing shows that have episode lengths shorter than 12 minutes. Programs for the older set can either be 13 x half hours or 26 x 12 minutes. Fresh design and original concepts will pique her interest, but Keeb says there's always room in the sked for classics. Don't bother pitching shows with violent content.

Preferred approach: Send at least the general idea, the designs and budget, but pitches delivered with outlines and scripts will be better received. Mail to Lise Meitner Str 9, Mainz 55129, Germany.

Market circuit: KidScreen Summit, MIPTV, Bologna Children's Book Fair, Annecy, MIPCOM



NICOLE KEEB



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Marc Buhaj



Jackie Cockle



Bernd Conrad



Scott Devine



Greg Goldstein



Beth Goss



Lisa Hallond



Liz Kalodner



Warren Traeger



Alison Wallace

Aardman Animations (Bristol, England, 44-117-984-8979): Having worked on shows including *Bob the Builder*, *Pingu* and *Rubbidubbers* as MD of HIT Entertainment's HOT Animation studio, **Jackie Cockle** has just the right preschool programming credentials to help Aardman expand its portfolio of TV fare for this demo. Cockle joins the company's in-house television production team as development producer.

Big Tent Entertainment (New York, New York, 212-604-0064): With great expectations for iconic brand Domo, the TV incarnation of which will launch on Nicktoons in the U.S. and on Nick's international channels this year, the licensing agency has recruited **Scott Devine** to build connections with consumer products buyers as VP of retail development. Devine is well-skilled in this area, having led the Wal-Mart team at Random House for the past five years to achieve year-on-year sales results exceeding the big-boxer's own growth rate.

Build-A-Bear Workshop (St. Louis, Missouri, 314-423-8000): **Scott Seay** has taken the reins at the make-your-own plush retailer in the wake of **Barry Erdos** stepping down as president and COO. Seay played a lead role in integrating Bear Factory into the company's holdings last year, as well as setting up a top-notch distribution and logistics center to keep product flowing into stores.

CBS (New York, New York, 212-975-4321): As the broadcast net digs into launching its new licensing and merchandising division, **Liz Kalodner** has been tapped to run it as EVP and GM of CBS Consumer Products. The move to a commercial outfit represents a gear change for Kalodner, who held the same title at Sesame Workshop, a not-for-profit company that sometimes wrestles with justifying its more consumer ventures.

HIT Entertainment (London, England, 44-207-554-2500): **Warren Traeger** has joined HIT's consumer products team as senior licensing manager of soft goods. The move leaves Entertainment Rights short a senior licensing manager for toys, gifts and food.

Jetix Europe (London, England, 44-208-222-3600): World-travelin' kidnet exec **Marc Buhaj** is crossing oceans again to join Jetix as SVP of programming. A native Australian, Buhaj jumped around Turner's holdings in Asia-Pacific for awhile (managing content for CN, Boomerang

and Pogo channels across the region, and launching Pogo in India) before landing in the U.S. as VP of programming and scheduling at Cartoon Network and Boomerang. When he officially starts at Jetix in April, Buhaj will oversee production, development, acquisitions, scheduling, on-air promotions and multimedia programming. He replaces **Michael Lekes**, who left the company in September for personal reasons.

K'Nex (Hatfield, Pennsylvania, 215-997-7722): The construction toy manufacturer has promoted a couple of its sales and marketing execs this month in the calm before Toy Fair. **Diane Adams** moves up from VP of sales to SVP of global sales and marketing, while **Barbara Rentschler** goes from senior director of marketing to VP of global marketing.

Leapfrog Enterprises (Emeryville, California, 510-420-5000): As the ELA giant continues to refocus its business, international markets represent an important strategic goal. To lead the charge, new president and CEO **Jeffrey Katz** has set up **Martin Pidel** as EVP of international. Pidel hails from Hasbro, where he held senior marketing positions in a variety of European territories before taking on the whole ball of wax as VP of international marketing.

MTV Networks (New York, New York, 212-846-8000): Applying his skills beyond the tube, Noggin veteran **Kenny Miller** has left his VP of production and programming position at the tween channel to be part of a new global digital team devoted to guiding the development of multi-platform brands and exploring new business opportunities in next-gen media and technology. As executive VP and creative director, Miller will drive digital platform development and report to unit president **Mika Salmi**.

PBS (Arlington, Virginia, 703-739-5000): Having spent the past few years delivering content through new media vehicles, veteran journalist **Jason Seiken** has ended the pubcaster's nationwide search for an SVP of interactive. Seiken was the founding editor of washingtonpost.com, after which he ran AOL's channel programming group. Now he'll oversee PBS sites including pbskids.org and pbskidsgo.org, as well as scouting for new opportunities for the channel's brands on emerging broadband and mobile platforms.

Turner Broadcasting System (New York, New York, 212-275-6327): After seven years with the studio, Universal EVP of consumer products **Beth Goss** has jumped ship to oversee Cartoon Network's Ad Sales, Marketing and Enterprises divisions. In her new role as EVP of the three teams, Goss will work with clients to develop long-term creative partnerships that take full advantage of the net's kid-reaching tools.

TV-Loonland (Munich, Germany, 49-89-205-080): Trading in Princess Sissi for Little Princess, former Jetix Consumer Products Germany licensing director **Bernd Conrad** is TV-L's new head of licensing and merchandising.

Twentieth Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising (Los Angeles, California, 310-369-1000): **Alison Wallace** moves up from senior manager to director of licensing and will now manage the studio's domestic apparel and accessories businesses.

Ty's Toy Box (Erlanger, Kentucky, 859-282-8697): Having guided the licensed products e-tailer through several exclusive direct-to-retail deals as a consultant, **Lisa Hallond** has now joined the company's executive ranks as COO. Before she started her own company, Toying With Success, Hallond was a category manager at Disney Consumer Products, where she helped the division grow its share of the girls role-play market from 2% in 2002 to 20% in 2004.

Upper Deck Entertainment (Carlsbad, California, 760-929-3482): With the trading card industry on the cusp of a major digital reinvention, Upper Deck's latest recruit makes a lot of sense. The company has brought aboard **Greg Goldstein** as VP of gaming and entertainment, and the experience he gained as VP of brand development at Activision and as VP of licensing and development at Acclaim should help as the company prepares to launch new trading card lines with online gaming apps.

Warner Bros. Consumer Products (Burbank, California, 818-560-1000): **Richard Goldsmith** is going hunting in his role as SVP of new business initiatives, a division devoted to unearthing characters ripe with ancillary potential from Warner's immense property library. Goldsmith, who left a VP of programming post at Univision Communications to join the ACME Lab (the new unit's internal nickname), will focus on developing the untapped properties and devising media strategies to roll them out. **Maribeth Towers-Toth** will also shoulder an SVP role, managing the properties' development in soft line categories.

Stepping in to replace Towers-Toth as VP of apparel and accessories for WBCEP is **Patti Buckner**, who used to be VP of apparel. And **Mike Gibbs** has been promoted from VP of domestic business operations to VP of licensing business development and worldwide brand assurance.

Lastly, **Preston Lewis** has jumped studios to join as VP of international licensing. Lewis hails from Disney Consumer Products, where he most recently managed the Winnie the Pooh franchise worldwide.

Oznet vet moves to the house of SpongeBob

After more than 20 years with Australia's mighty public broadcaster, ABC Kids programmer Deirdre Brennan is moving on to a new gig at commercial TV rival Nick. The appointment of Brennan as programming director ends a year-long search and puts her squarely in the driver's seat of content development, acquisitions and scheduling.

Going to a channel that focuses entirely on kids and has the backing of such a powerful and well-resourced parentco is a dream come true for Brennan. But the position doesn't come without its challenges.

For one thing, despite Australia's small population, its kids broadcast market is so competitive that kidnets have to do a lot of groundwork in communities to make an impression with the audience. Nick's outreach efforts on this front have been impressive, says Brennan, but they naturally have an impact on the channel's operating budget, so some aspects of the programming strategy may need to be approached in a cost-conscious way.

And then there's the issue of quotas. Although it tries to hit a 25% to 30% range of homegrown fare, the ABC is much more self-regulated than Australia's pay-TV nets, so Brennan will devote some time over the next few weeks to getting up to speed on the quotas that impact Nick's air. She'll also work closely with channel GM Katrina Southon to ID programming goals, define her strategy and find out more about Nick's vast support structure. "Basically, I'm going to be a Sponge...Bob," she quips.

But Brennan has already gleaned considerable knowledge about Nick's current MO just by keeping a close eye on the local kidcasting landscape. "As a competitor, I've been watching everything they've done in the last six years with a microscope. I know their schedules, I know their initiatives, I know their local productions. I know what they do, and I can't wait to find out what they want to do next." She's also looking forward to accessing the qualitative research Nick regularly conducts to get an inside look



Former ABC Kids programmer Deirdre Brennan can't wait to work with Nick's strong kids shows

at how the kids demographic is changing before anyone else.

Brennan leaves ABC in a good position since the '07 programming season is pretty much locked. And to help guide the team until a permanent replacement is found, Donna Andrews has stepped in as a consultant for the next three months. **JC**



How to reach

some of the key companies in this issue

4Kids Entertainment

New York, New York 212-758-7666
www.4kidsentertainment.com

Avon

New York, New York 212-282-5000
www.avon.com

Bandai America

Cypress, California 714-816-9500
www.bandai.com

Blockbuster

Dallas, Texas 214-854-3190
www.blockbuster.com

Breakthrough Animation

Toronto, Canada 416-766-6588
www.breakthroughfilms.com

Canal Panda

Madrid, Spain 34-91-714-1080
www.canal-panda.com

Cartoon Network Enterprises

New York, New York 212-275-6882
www.cartoonnetwork.com

CCI Entertainment

Toronto, Canada 416-964-8750
www.ccientertainment.com

Entertainment Rights

London, England 44-208-762-6200
www.entertainmentrights.com

GameStop

Grapevine, Texas 817-424-2000
www.gamestop.com

Genius Products

Santa Monica, California 310-453-1222
www.geniusproducts.com

The Gotham Group

New York, New York 212-414-7000
www.gothaminc.com

Hasbro

Pawtucket, Rhode Island 401-431-8697
www.hasbro.com

HIT Entertainment

New York, New York 212-463-9623
www.hitentertainment.com

Jetix Europe

London, England 44-208-222-3600
www.jetixeuropa.com

Just Me! Music

Franklin, Tennessee 615-309-5606
www.justmemusic.com

LEGO

Enfield, Connecticut 860-749-2291
www.lego.com

Little League Baseball

Williamsport, Pennsylvania 570-326-1921
www.littleleague.org

Mattel

El Segundo, California 310-252-2000
www.mattel.com

Marvel Entertainment

New York, New York 212-576-4000
www.marvel.com

MGA Entertainment

Los Angeles, California 323-966-5771
www.mgae.com

National Geographic Society

Washington, DC 202-857-7000
www.ngs.org

Nelvana

Toronto, Canada 416-535-0935
www.nelvana.com

Neptuno Films

Barcelona, Spain 34-93-784-1622
www.neptunofilms.com

Nickelodeon Australia

Sydney, Australia 61-2-9813-6200
www.nickelodeon.com.au

Nicktoons

New York, New York 212-258-8000
www.nicktoonnetwork.com

The NPD Group

Port Washington, New York 516-625-0700
www.npd.com

Playmates Toys

Costa Mesa, California 714-428-2000
www.playmatestoy.com

Playskool

Pawtucket, Rhode Island 401-431-8697
www.hasbro.com/playskool

Radica USA

Dallas, Texas 972-490-0717
www.radicagames.com

Rocket Licensing

London, England 44-207-652-7613
www.rocketlicensing.com

RoyaltyPros Licensing

New York, New York 212-366-8676
www.royaltypros.com

Sesame Workshop

New York, New York 212-875-6000
www.sesameworkshop.org

SmartJog

Los Angeles, California 310-315-9300
www.smartjog.com

Sony Pictures Consumer Products

Culver City, California 310-244-7788
www.sonypictures.com

Southern Star

Sydney, Australia 61-2-9202-8518
www.southernstargroup.com

Studio Espinosa

Cambridge, Massachusetts 617-441-7773
www.studioespinosa.com

TV-Loonland

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www.loonland.com

Yahoo!

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Calendar of Events

KidScreen Summit	Feb. 7-9	New York, NY	416-408-2300 (Canada)	www.kidscreensummit.com	Prod/Prog/Lic
American International Toy Fair	Feb. 11-14	New York, NY	212-675-1141	www.toy-tia.org	Toys/Games
New York Comic-Con	Feb. 23-25	New York, NY	888-605-6059	www.nycomiccon.com	Publishing
National Halloween Toy & Party Show	Feb. 23-26	Rosemont, IL	800-323-5462	www.transworldexhibits.com	App/Lic/Merch
London Book Fair	Mar. 5-7	London, England	44-208-271-2124	www.londonbookfair.co.uk	Publishing
Game Developers Conference	Mar. 5-9	San Francisco, CA	415-947-6000	www.gdconf.com	Inter/MM
Cartoon Movie	Mar. 7-9	Potsdam, Germany	32-2-242-9343 (Belgium)	www.cartoon-media.be	Anim/Film
Sportel America	Mar. 12-14	Miami, FL	201-869-4022	www.sportelamerica.org	Sports/Apparel
Licensing Forum Central	Mar. 13-14	Warsaw, Poland	212-627-5828 (U.S.)	www.licensingforum.com	Licensing
TV of Tomorrow	Mar. 13-14	San Francisco, CA	415-824-5806	www.thetvoftomorrowshow.com	TV/Inter
Braincamp	Mar. 15-16	New York, NY	212-545-9559	www.braincamp.com	Multimedia
Tokyo International Anime Fair	Mar. 22-25	Tokyo, Japan	81-3-5320-4786	www.taf.metro.tokyo.jp	Animation
Youth Marketing Mega Event	Mar. 25-28	Huntington Beach, CA	888-670-8200	www.iirusa.com/youth	Marketing
FICCI Frames	Mar. 26-28	Mumbai, India	91-22-2496-8000	www.ficci-frames.com	TV/Film/MM
Sprockets Toronto International Film Festival	Apr. 13-22	Toronto, Canada	416-967-7371	www.e.bell.ca/filmfest/sprockets	Film
NAB	Apr. 14-19	Las Vegas, NV	202-429-5300	www.nab.org	Multimedia
MIPTV	Apr. 16-20	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.miptv.com	TV/Prod/Prog
MILIA	Apr. 16-20	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.milia.com	Inter/MM
Cartoons on the Bay	Apr. 19-22	Positano, Italy	39-06-3749-8315	www.cartoonsbay.com	TV/Anim
JPMA (Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association)	Apr. 23-25	Orlando, FL	856-642-4401	www.jpma.org	Toys/Games
Bologna Children's Book Fair	Apr. 24-27	Bologna, Italy	39-051-282-111	www.bolognafiere.it	Publishing
Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film	Apr. 26-May 1	Stuttgart, Germany	49-711-925-460	www.itfs.de	Anim/MM
ToyCon	Apr. 30-May 2	San Antonio, TX	212-675-1141	www.toy-tia.org	Toys
KidScreen West	May 14-15	Santa Monica, CA	416-408-2300 (Canada)	www.kidscreen.com	Lic/Merch
Licensing in India	May 14-16	Bangalore, India	212-627-5828 (U.S.)	www.licensinginindia.com	Licensing
L.A. Screenings	May 16-25	Hollywood, CA	212-288-3933	www.videoageinternational.com	TV/Film
Book Expo America	June 1-3	New York, NY	203-840-5614	www.bookexpoamerica.com	Publishing
nextMEDIA: The Future of Digital Content	June 8-10	Banff, Canada	416-921-3171 x226	www.futureofdigitalcontent.com	Multimedia
Book Expo Canada	June 8-11	Toronto, Canada	416-491-7565	www.reedexpo.ca/bookexpo	Publishing
Banff Television Festival	June 10-13	Banff, Canada	403-678-1216	www.bwtf.com	TV
SGMA Spring Market	June 11-13	Las Vegas, NV	202-775-1762	www.sgmamarkets.com	Sports/Apparel
Annecy	June 11-16	Annecy, France	33-4-5010-0900	www.annecy.org	Animation
Promax & BDA	June 12-14	New York, NY	310-788-9600	www.promax.org/conferences	Marketing/MM
Licensing 2007 International	June 19-21	New York, NY	203-882-1300	www.licensingshow.com	Licensing
DISCOP	June 20-22	Budapest, Hungary	33-1-4229-3224 (France)	www.discop.com	TV/Prod/Prog
ASTRA Marketplace	June 24-27	Las Vegas, NV	312-222-0986	www.astratoy.org	Toys/Games
PLATFORM International Animation Festival	June 25-30	Portland, OR	818-508-9186	www.platformfestival.com	Animation
Tokyo Toy Show	June 28-July 1	Tokyo, Japan	81-3-3829-2513	www.toys.or.jp/english.htm	Toys/Games
Hong Kong Licensing Show	July 3-6	Hong Kong, China	852-183-0668	www.hklicensingshow.com	Licensing
E3 Media and Business Summit	July 11-13	Santa Monica, CA	508-875-3976	www.e3expo.com	Inter/Games
Comic-Con	July 26-29	San Diego, CA	619-491-2475	www.comic-con.org	Publishing
SIGGRAPH 2007	Aug. 5-9	San Diego, CA	312-321-6830	www.siggraph.org	Inter/Anim
Brand Licensing 2007	Oct. 2-3	London, England	44-208-987-0970	www.brandlicensingexpo.com	Licensing
MIPCOM Jr.	Oct. 6-7	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcomjunior.com	TV/Prod/Prog
MIPCOM	Oct. 8-12	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcom.com	TV/Prod/Prog

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What is your favorite toy or non-video game thing to play with?

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action figures	13.3%
Monopoly	12.8%
Lego	11.3%
chess/checkers	6.2%
board games	4.6%
basketball	4.1%

Girls 8 to 11 (193 kids)

board games	16.6%
Monopoly	11.9%
Bratz	8.8%
dolls	8.3%
stuffed animals	6.2%
Barbies	5.2%

Boys 12 to 15 (191 kids)

board games	11.5%
Monopoly	8.9%
football	8.4%
action figures	7.9%
card games	7.9%
bike	5.2%

Girls 12 to 15 (168 kids)

board games	15.5%
Monopoly	11.3%
Barbies	7.7%
stuffed animal	7.7%
Bratz	6.0%
card games	4.2%

**Board games
score high on
kids' fave
plaything list**

What is your favorite website?

Boys 8 to 11 (232 kids)

cartoonnetwork.com	11.2%
myspace.com	9.9%
nick.com	7.3%
disney.go.com	4.7%
youtube.com	4.7%
addictinggames.com	4.3%

Girls 8 to 11 (239 kids)

disney.go.com	28.5%
myspace.com	7.1%
nick.com	6.7%
yahoo.com	4.6%
millsberry.com	4.2%
clubpenguin.com	3.8%

Boys 12 to 15 (224 kids)

myspace.com	43.3%
google.com	7.6%
runescape.com	4.9%
addictinggames.com	4.5%
yahoo.com	4.0%
disney.go.com	3.6%

Girls 12 to 15 (221 kids)

myspace.com	54.3%
disney.go.com	5.4%
google.com	4.1%
yahoo.com	3.6%
miniclip.com	2.3%
youtube.com	2.3%



Research tidbits found in this feature are extracted from the November/December 2006 issue of KidSay's Trend Tracker, a syndicated study published five times a year that breaks down what's cool and what's not according to 1,000 American kids ages eight to 15. KidSay, an 11-year-old full-service kids market research firm, works with schools and youth organizations in hundreds of U.S. cities to collect and analyze data about trends emerging in the categories of entertainment, famous people/characters, internet, food/beverage, spending, toys and lifestyle. If you'd like more information about Trend Tracker, please contact Bob Reynolds by phone (866-273-8555/913-390-8110) or by e-mail (bob@kidsay.com).



**Best Feature Film
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**Deloitte
Asia Pacific**

**Winner of Fast 500
Asia Pacific 2006**

**Deloitte
Asia Pacific**

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India 2006**



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**Nominee
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**Nominee
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**Best TV Series
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